



ASTRONAUTILIA

Άστροναυτιλία

By Jan Křesadlo



Translated by Ace Rockman

Printed by Ace Rockman, Great Britain, 2025

Print #: ____

Greek Text originally published by Ivo Železný
Publishing House, Prague, 1995

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Transcription of Křesadlo's text partly based on
<https://github.com/aoidospoiematos/Astronautilia> but
priority has been given to Křesadlo's text [accessed
31/10/2024] (*referred to as ASP in my notes*)

Translations of the *Preamble*, *Introduction*, and
Commentary on the Finished Translation are by Václav
Z. J. Pinkava and have been included here with his
permission

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FOREWORD

The Greek original of this book was written, so the story goes, either by Franta the cosmic skunk, or, by way of a mystification, by the archivist Mr. Divíšek, whereas the present author is only the purveyor of the Czech translation (see the Preamble), so that were any critical voices to be raised against the propounded variations to the Homeric dialect in order to express modern concepts, they are to be levied at one or the other of them.

I used to write Greek poems as a grammar-school boy, as may yet be recalled by some witnesses, and so I cannot deny it, indeed, latterly also as the main ingredient of my novel “GraveLarks” (correctly published only in the Prague edition), but, as far as memory serves, I have certainly hitherto not written anything this extensive, which means, you’ll admit, that I am not likely capable of it. I therefore leave it entirely up to you whether you choose to believe in the cosmic skunk and/or Mr. Divíšek, and will make no further comment thereto, being content with the role of the translator, which, you will agree, is also a kind of achievement, particularly in view of it being in syllabotonic hexameters.

I have always dreamed of something like *Astronautilia*, but was never sure I could do it, without the help of some cosmic skunk or other. Nevertheless, age brings frailty to the body, and that includes the brain. Even if there were some intangible principle behind it all, experience shows that it cannot express itself without a functioning instrument.

The recent literary output of my more renowned generational peers, howsoever officially acclaimed, has spurned me to delay no longer, so here you have it.

The book may be regarded as a sort of mental analogue of some fringe feat, such as crossing the English Channel aka La Manche, to climb atop this or that mountain by some never before seen method, to make a return trip to the North or South Pole – on a push-scooter, say – to cross the ocean on a raft or small boat, etc, etc, simply put, as an expression of having the guts.

Compared to the aforementioned physical feats, this one has the advantage of being somewhat more enduring, being primarily a written record, and also being there to be read, i.e. not entirely self-indulgent. To be even less self-serving, the book comes with a Czech translation, which in turn represents a further, supplementary valiant effort, albeit of lesser calibre.

Finding a place for this book within the culture-vulture axiomatic system is bound to be problematic. On the one hand, it is ‘merely’ sci-fi, and yet, there is the indisputably evident fact of the Greek text and its true-to-form translation. You’ll have to give it some thought, comrades.

But even if, by some mental escapology, *Astronautilia* were to be credibly exorcised out of ‘serious’ or ‘proper’ literature, it still amounts to an intrepid feat akin to building a model of Prague Castle, out of matches, in a bottle, which surely merits being shown to the public, and its creator to be remembered by posterity.

And, since Franta the cosmic skunk has flown away again and Mr. Divíšek has passed on (see the Preamble), howsoever it came to pass, the one to take responsibility for it remains none other but the present author.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pinkava', with a stylized, flowing script.

Translated by Václav Z. J. Pinkava (2023)

PREAMBLE

The name Divíšek the archivist is of course well known from Karel Čapek's tale about the fall of the House of Votický, but this must have been some other Mr. Divíšek because it was at quite a different time. Čapek's Divíšek lived at the time of the "First Republic" whereas our Divíšek is quite a contemporary figure, from the period after Slovakia broke away, as we shall see.

Let it not surprise anyone that they were both not only of the same name, but also both archivists. Such coincidences happen relatively frequently, e.g. apart from the aforementioned Karel Čapek proper (1890- 1938) there was another Karel Čapek, writer, (1860-1927), who accordingly extended his name to Karel Čapek–Chod.

And if we stick to writers:

Apart from the renowned Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) by his true name one Józef Korzeniowski, we had a more humble local Josef Konrád, practically of the same timeframe (1859-1921), who apparently wrote over thirty books, of which, it seems, nobody has heard these days.

This is quite piquant, considering, that judging by old issues of the 'Young Reader' magazine I inherited from my father, this insignificant Czech Josef Konrád wrote quite well. Likewise applies *a fortiori* to the lesser known Karel (Matěj) Čapek (-Chod).

Aside from the communo-catholic Graham Greene it seems there exists in parallel a less prominent Graham Greene who wrote adventure novels, etc, etc.

Maybe he too wrote quite well, as I would tend to expect.

Of course, there are plenty more cases of a coincident surnames.

Aside from the much-lauded Milan Kundera there vegetates the humble poet Kundera Ludvík, and apart from Konrads of the Josef persuasion, Czech literature covers we have an Eduard and a Karel and so on.

Our incipient Křesadlo had, until recently, and moreover in London, a parallel essayist, one Křesadlo Milan, which was really ing. Kobliha, but he went back to Czechia and into politics, of some Christian-democratic ilk, I think.

Citizen Václav Pinkava, psychologist and hobbyist mathematical logician, had a much more problematic double, a certain Václav Pinkava from the Marxism seat at, I think, Prague's Technical University Chemistry faculty, who by a curious coincidence also got into symbolic logics, and was even officially set to study at Kraków, as a representative of the better half of the nation.

Once, when the aforementioned Křesadlo was to appear at the multiple-valued logics conference at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana USA with the so-called Pinkava Logics, professor Surma from Kraków expressed his private misgivings of how can this be 'jak jest to możliwe', which became clear when the author appeared physically.

Of course, it may well be that our Divíšek was a descendant of Čapek's Divíšek and that together with his surname he also inherited his love of the archivist's trade.

Whatever the case may be one day this contemporary Divíšek turned up at my office just like the original Divíšek turned up in doctor Mejstřík's office (critics please note how unoriginal this is being a symptom of insufficient creativity!) and just like the latter he wore a worried expression, but not the gold-rimmed spectacles, and introduced himself as Divíšek, the archivist.

I felt I had seen him somewhere before but I couldn't remember where until it transpired during the conversation that I had seen him working as a church organist and that a mutual friend from SPOMAKO choir had recommended me to him. I had not seen Mr. Divíšek since the days when I ceased to be active in Prague's church choirs, i.e. since 1968, but I must say he had not changed much, just had a few more wrinkles.

"Doctor, I've come for advice," said Mr. Divíšek and put a big file of papers down on the desk.

"Please, do go on," I said, because for some reason I was beginning to get interested.

Perhaps I was hoping that it would be some kind of interesting mystery, like the fall of the House of Votický, or something like that, basically I had this feeling that it wouldn't be the usual, boring old psychology thing that people sometimes still come to me with even though I am retired.

And I was right although what he had come with was much more bizarre than the affair of the fall of the Votickýs. Because what Mr. Divíšek said to me was roughly this:

“Not far from the M- Archive, where I work as a part-time pensioner, there’s a little snack bar, you know the sort of place, where you can get coffee, open sandwiches and so on.

And I always go there at lunch time for a couple of sandwiches and a coffee because I live alone and making myself a packed lunch is too much trouble, and in any case – you have to eat – don’t you?

Well, one day I started noticing a man there who looked kind of strange:

I can’t really say why, maybe it was his clothes.

He had a strange kind of jacket; it may have been padded like the sort people wear for skiing but it had a strange kind of silvery sheen. His features were basically unremarkable, and he looked somewhere between thirty-five and fifty years old, you couldn’t tell exactly, and he had sort of nondescript brown hair.

He would sit there looking sort of nondescript eating and drinking something.

I don’t really know why I noticed him because he wasn’t at all conspicuous – even the jacket could have been just the latest fashion – after all we get all sorts of things from the West these days – and the way he behaved was really quite unassuming.

This went on for a few days, I can't even say how long – until one day –

Oh yes! I forgot to tell you that I am a bit of a sci-fi fan.

Well, one day I took out the latest issue of *Ikaria*, the science-fiction magazine.

And this man suddenly got up and without saying a word came to sit down at my table – he didn't even ask if the seat was free – but it obviously was.

"I see you are a sci-fi fan," he said suddenly, in perfect Czech but in a sort of hollow voice without intonation – "do you think things like that could happen? – I mean – in real life?"

"Of course they could," I said, "don't you think we're nearly there? My dear sir, mankind quite often does a very good job of describing the future. The details, well perhaps the details aren't quite right – too much like the present – but in general, in general I think we've got it more or less right."

"Look," I went on, "at home I have some old copies of the old Golden Prague magazine, you know the one? Well one year they had a sort of serial, it was translated from French. It was called 'Wonders of The Twentieth Century' written by someone called A. Robida."

"It was in the 1893 volume – so that's a hundred years ago now, isn't it – and you know what, it was basically all exactly right – women's equality, television, air travel – well whatever you can think of – except that in the illustrations things were sort of quaintly in 19th century style.

For example, the television – it’s called a Telephonoscope in the story – has a kind of oval screen and a decorated frame with various swirls and twiddles a bit like a mirror from those hundred years past – but basically, he got it all so right, it almost makes your flesh creep!

So, what I think – in fact I’m sure of it – is that the same thing applies to us and the future and the idea that space travel will be perfectly common.

After all, if people have the ability to foresee things – and to deduce things – of course it will happen – it’s bound to! I’m sure of it!”

The man smiled a bit and then he said:

“And do you believe in time travel?”

And I said: “Well of course I do, it’s part of future progress isn’t it.”

“But,” he went on, “if you could travel from the future back into the past then that would mean that time travel would in fact be a reality today?!”

“Yes, it stands to reason,” I said, getting a little annoyed.

“And,” he said, “if I told you that I am one of those visitors from the future, would you believe me?”

“Come off it,” I said, “pull the other one. If what you said was true then you would hardly be speaking today’s Czech, after all – language changes – and I expect that time travel is still far off

in the future – although, you know technological advances seem to be ever more fast-paced –”

“And what if I had an interpreter with me,” the man said.

It was only then that I noticed that he had something behind his ear, like one of those things that people who are hard-of-hearing have.

“Oh, come on, where would you put him,” I said.

“He is outside,” he said, “we communicate by radiophone.”

“He can hear what you are saying, he translates it for me and then he tells me what to answer on the basis of what I am thinking – from the signals from my speech centre and my brain signals – I am specially trained to repeat the sounds he makes – it is part of our training.” That would have explained his hollow voice without intonation and the fact that, as I noticed before, it always took a bit of time before he said anything.

“Well,” I said, “I’d like to believe you because I like mystery and sci-fi. But common sense tells me that you are either a madman or a conman of some kind who wants to get the better of me.”

The man laughed bitterly:

“That is what I was afraid would happen – you see I have crash-landed here and I could use your help – but the way things are I will most probably have to rot here at the end of the primitive twentieth or in the twenty-first century -”

He howled hopelessly but then immediately he pulled himself together.

“You know,” I said, “if you could prove to me that the interpreter really exists, and that he really is doing the interpreting, then I’d probably have to believe you – but I expect that if I went outside with you now you would just hit me over the head or something – because I can’t believe what you’re saying, you must have made it up.”

“Ah, but now you are acting absolutely against your own principles,” the man then said, “because a moment ago you were assuring me that what is today’s sci-fi fantasy will be the reality of the future, like the things of a hundred years ago – and now, when you have the chance to see for yourself that it really is so, you are backing out like a little man with no imagination _”

The discussion went on a little longer but then I left the snack-bar with him and went around the corner where a sort of shabby old grey van was parked.

He opened the back and pointed inside. I was expecting to see some kind of machinery or something but all I could see was some kind of animal, like a kind of skunk.

“Oh, come on, this is your interpreter?” I said, “don’t mess about, it’s just a smelly old skunk!”

“Go on, try him,” he said.

Well, like most Czechs of my age I can still speak a bit of German so I leant over to the skunk and I said:

“He, der Mann hier sagt, daß du ein Dolmetscher bist. Also antworte mir, falls du es wirklich bist!” – Of course, it would have done just as well if the animal could understand and speak Czech but that somehow hadn’t occurred to me.

And believe it or not, the creature said:

“Jawohl, mein Herr, ich bin der universale kosmische Dolmetscher und Übersetzer, ich beherrsche ungefähr eine Million Sprachen, und andere kann ich gewöhnlich generieren aufgrund deren, die ich schon kenne, durch die Gesetze der Etymologie – Ihr gehorksamster Diener, mein Herr!”

Well that was too much for me, so I tried English – and he did it again!

Well, then I remembered that I once read a story by Stanisław Lem about a universal cosmic translator that looked like a skunk and that’s when I understood that the man was right, that he really was a time traveller from the future, crashed in our time, Divíšek went on, and I, as I recount the whole story, thought to myself that this is rather faulty logic.

Divíšek continued:

“So, when I agreed, or rather accepted, that this man was a time traveller, or as he called himself a ‘chrononaut’, I said that we should go back to the snack-bar and celebrate and that I’d buy him a drink.

He agreed, but paid for it himself – he pulled a huge wad of our banknotes out of his pocket – but you could tell that he didn’t really understand what he was holding because the skunk only

had an audio link to him so he couldn't read the notes for him, so I helped him out a bit and made sure they gave him the right change as well.

Then we sat down and he said he had a favour to ask of me:

His friends were supposed to come and pick him up in a spaceship during the night of such and such a date – it was about two weeks after we met, but that it was to be in the Tatra mountains and he would rather not tell me precisely where. But meanwhile Slovakia had become an independent state and that he needs some papers just in case they do a check at the border, because he will have to get there in the van.

Well, I said to him, how come if you have such wonderful technology, or at least since it appears that you do, how come you have to travel in such a primitive way. That doesn't seem to fit in, does it, because usually in these sci-fi things astronauts move about using some kind of matter transporter, they go bllllll, go sort of wobbly, disappear and then appear somewhere completely different – so what's all this – maybe he is a conman after all.

And he says, look I told you I have crashed, your Robinson Crusoe was dressed in goatskins and used a spear to hunt with on his island even though when he was at home, he wore clothes and used a gun – well that convinced me a bit again.

So I said to him – well all right but I can't just give you my Identity Card – what if you don't return it – I don't even know you – but he said that it wouldn't take a minute, that he has another robot in his van which can make an indistinguishable

copy, naturally with the appropriate changes which the translator tells him to make, that it will all happen while-you-wait, and how do I think he got all that money anyway? I sold a few of my clothes, the robot made replicas of them for me and then he did the same with the money I got for them – and that was that – and I can give you as much of it as you like for the loan of the papers.

Well, I didn't really know what to think, on the one hand I wanted to believe that it really was like some kind of fairy-tale but on the other hand common sense kept getting in the way.

So I said: Look here, I'll do what you're asking, and I'll lend you my Passport as well so that you can get a false one made too just in case the Slovaks want it now instead of just the ID card – they might change the rules, you just can't trust them – but Mr. Spaceman, you don't get something for nothing!

I don't want money, that was never my thing, and since I'm working, I've got enough to live on.

But I've always wanted to write some kind of sci-fi book to make my mark in the world and maybe even get a Nebula award and become famous like Stanisław Lem or Arthur Clarke or Gaku Konishi and all those others – or like our own Josef Nesvadba – but I never had the time for it, or the patience and imagination for that matter.

So, Mr. Spaceman, I'd like to ask you if in exchange for the loan of my papers you could write down your real adventures and I'd have them published as my own sci-fi and that way I'd become famous.

Well, he scratched his head – said that this was the kind of complication that he didn't need, but yes all right, that he would dictate it to the translator, the skunk like translator like the one in Lem, and that he would be able to translate it quickly and write it down – that he is equipped to do that too – and that it should be quite fast.

By the way, he also told me that his skunk was made up mostly of something like brain cells, that is why he could absorb so many languages – that's just by the way – that he is sustained by some kind of pills made for him by the robot from ordinary provisions and so he doesn't need a proper digestive system and so on – but I'm digressing. So, he said, he must get started on it right away to get it done in time – I was surprised that he didn't object, after all he could have just hit me over the head and taken my ID anyway – but he was pretty decent – maybe they have more advanced ethical standards in the future as well -

So, we set a date to meet a week later in the snack bar – I still went there every lunch time for my sandwiches but I didn't see the astronaut there again – until the day we had agreed. So then we went to the van and I, somewhat worried, lent him my ID card and Passport – and he had the robot there, it looked like a huge metal spider, and he stuck it in its mouth, it shook for a bit and then spat both of them out, both my original documents and the forgeries for the astronaut with his photograph and everything, occupation programmer for company UNYSIS, name Jan Novák, place of birth Pardubice I think in '49 – well it was credible enough.

I was relieved to get my papers back and then I said – now your part of the bargain.

And he pulled out the manuscript that you have on the desk in front of you – I opened it – it was in some strange writing.

What's this you've given me; I can't read it.

I am sorry, he said, there has been an error, but now there is no time to fix it, tomorrow night I have to leave for my own time and probably to continue my journey through space.

What happened? – well I explained to Franta – that's the translator's name by the way – that you want literary fame and that he should do a good job of it – but the idiot got a bit mixed up between your period and the Renaissance – you understand, since he needs to know so many languages there is not much room for good general knowledge – he would have to be the size of an elephant for that – so he thought that to guarantee the right effect among the intellectuals it would have to be in Classical Greek – so that is what he did – I am very sorry – you know modern theroids must exercise their own initiative, one cannot direct everything they do – and this time it did not work out.

But I am sure you will find someone here who still knows Greek – so he will translate it for you and that will be that.

I know it is not quite perfect but I am sure the content will interest you and others. Look I will have to say good-bye, thank you for everything. And he got in his van and was gone before I could say a thing.

So I have been asking around if there is anyone who still knows Classical Greek and ing. Černil recommended you. So that's why I've come —?" ended Mr. Divíšek, quizzically.

I opened the manuscript, and sure enough – there was an epic poem about a journey through space, what we would call a kind of sci-fi, but according to Divíšek this was no fiction – but it was written in Homeric Greek and some of the modern concepts were taken from modern Greek or simply taken from international terminology – well that skunk-translator had had a bit of a job on his hands and I was surprised that he could have done it in one week! – if what the astronaut had said was true. He must have been a feat of engineering indeed.

So I said I would have a look at it and Divíšek left.

I would read it in the evenings and it was quite interesting, but I didn't start on the translation for the time being, because translation work is hard work, whereas reading is a pleasure. And then some important things came up and I suddenly had the feeling that I wouldn't have time for the Greek Astronautilia.

I wanted to return it to Divíšek, with regret, but then I realised that I did not know his address, and as it turned out neither did our mutual acquaintance who had recommended me to him.

But I did know the name of the archive where he worked because Divíšek mentioned it at the start of his story (which I called the M- Archive for our purposes here) so I took the manuscript along there and asked where I could find Mr. Divíšek the archivist.

But they told me that unfortunately Mr. Divíšek had died about a month ago, of a stroke – what a great pity.

And they talked about him and said how sorry they were and how wonderful he had been, what a kind person he had been and how educated, they say he spoke several languages very well, but he was also very modest and he never bragged about it and hardly anyone knew that he could – that he was an excellent musician too, he could play the piano and the organ – which I did happen to know about him, but the fact that he was a linguist did surprise me and it got me thinking.

Excuse me, I said, do you happen to know if Mr. Divíšek could also speak Classical Greek?

We don't know, they said, but in his case, you couldn't rule it out, rather the opposite they said, it would be quite likely.

And so, I left, but the mystery remained, although it no longer looked quite so mysterious and there could have been a quite natural explanation.

When I got home, I laid out the manuscript again.

I'll translate it no matter who wrote it, the astro-skunk or Divíšek! I resolved.

But if it was to be published it would have to include the Greek text so that the public could see that it wasn't just your run of the mill fiction, that the translation is a real translation and that there really is an original – either a tribute to Divíšek or a wormhole to a great mystery.

And if it isn't going to be for Divíšek and towards his Nebula Prize now I'll translate it any way I like, not in prose but in properly stressed hexameters.

I'll be sort of like Vaňorný to Divíšek or the cosmic skunk! Like Vaňorný, mind you, not Šrámek, because translating in free-verse, better called vertical prose, as they say – for today's reader, that's no kind of challenge.

And as for Vladimír Šrámek specifically, it is easy to demonstrate that he never translated the *Odyssey* from the Greek original “for today's reader” as he writes in the book's accompanying colophon, but from the German translation by Johann Heinrich Voß, because every time Voß diverges from Homer, Šrámek follows Voß.

I know that, because I happen to have the *Odyssey* from Voß and from Šrámek. I don't have their *Iliad*, so I can't claim a hundred percent certainty, but there is indirect evidence – and I'm not some reader of today.

But, since I've let on here, I had better back it up, so here's one example:

The first is in the *Odyssey* in verses 71-73 of the first song, describing how the giant cyclops Polyphémus came about. Homer just says – through the mouth of Zeus himself – that the mother of Polyphémus, the sea nymph Thoösa made love to Poseidon in the domed caves:

71 Θέωσα δ' ἐμὲ τέκε νύμφη
 73 ἐν σπηταὶ γλαφυροῖσι Ποσειδάωνι μίγξις.

Which the brutish German enhanced to suit his own aggressive tastes:

71

Ihn gebahr die Nymphe Thoosa

.....

.....

73 Welche Poseidon einst in

dämmernder Grotte bezwungen

He never had to do that, neither compelled by the tyranny of metre, or anything, it would have been fine instead of dämmernder which is wrong anyway and means dim rather than domed (γλαφυροῖσι) to write gewölbter and instead of gezwungen, he could have written unarmet and that would have been true to Homer, without the sadism.

But that would not be so titillating.

And, Šrámek, suspecting nothing, translated it for today's reader:

71 Kyklopa toho zrodila mu nymfa

Thoosa

.....

.....

73 Poseidon ji kdysi znásilnil v šeré

sluji

And so on.

Admittedly, this has nothing to do with our book, but it has arisen out of the context and so let it be known, so that

translators do not swindle poor maidens, educated at the polytechnic level.

Let us now proceed to the epic itself.

Translated by Václav Z. J. Pinkava (2023)

Letter for the Learned Reader

O excellent, learned reader (male or female), hello!

This Greek text lies on display for you in the manner of an epic composition about a spaceship's journey amongst the stars, composed in hexameters in epic language, like a kind of (behold!) new Odyssey of the present day, or, if you wish, of a future age, but shorter than an ancient one, exposing the degeneration of humanity in this manner. For the *hoi polloi*, who don't know the Greek language, for their sake, a Czech translation is attached, as you can see.

For you, however, o excellent learned person – a reader male or female – the text is accessible in its original form, which I humbly implore you to read generously and have full enjoyment of it. Concerning the text, as is customary, I wish to communicate a little bit in the Latin language, which all people of our times who know the Ancient Greek language are equally competent in.

And first concerning the things surrounding the text, its history, method of invention, *et cetera*, the other things that are explained in the Czech section which is entitled “Předznamenání” (“Foreword”).

And those things, if you are proficient in the Czech language, you may read in the indicated place.

If, however, you don't know that vernacular, you might politely ask to read a shorter synopsis, which makes up this letter, in place of the Czech proem.

Next, another thing concerning the language of this epic composition is annotated: the poem was written, as you can read in the Proem, by an artificial being "made of living flesh", as they say, who was the translator of the entire cosmos' languages, and was manufactured for this reason.

Knowing a million languages, he was also capable of fathering many others from those that it already knew with the laws of etymology.

This translator's appearance was similar to a terrestrial animal that zoologist give the name *mephitis*, and was manufactured in this way as a kind of joke. But this universal-translator wrote the narrative about the cosmic journey in Homeric language in an erroneous manner, falsely believing that it would glorify and enlarge the narrative, incorrectly confusing the present time with that of the 16th century.

I suspect, however, that Franta (the name by which the universal translator was called) didn't know the Ancient Greek language and its Homeric dialect directly, but he generated them from those languages that he knew, as was his custom, and so he did not always form his words

absolutely correctly, about which you shall understand very many of them regardless.

But now concerning the introductory Czech text, if you don't know the vernacular, you should see the following:

It now follows:

A SHORTER SUMMARY of the

“Předznamenání”

i.e. THE CZECH PROEM

In this text, the author narrates that he was visited by a certain archivist called Divíšek, carrying a manuscript book.

A book concerning which this Divíšek is said to have recounted the following from the author: Divíšek narrated that in some inn (or in a place where food is bought and eaten, and which is called an “automat” or “bistro” in the Czech vernacular) he had encountered some man, and that he told him – i.e., Divíšek – that he was an astronaut, shipwrecked in the present time and place.

That he and his companions were supposed to rise up with their spaceship after a week in the Tatra mountains, but in the meantime the Slovak republic was created and that he lacked an identification card in order to gain entry into Slovakia.

The astronaut asked the archivist to lend him his identification card so that he could have it imitated by a “robot” or intelligent machine. When the archivist hesitated out of modesty, he brought out an artificially made animal that resembled a skunk, a polyglot called Franta, thereby persuading the archivist.

The archivist agreed, but he asked for the written account of the astronaut’s journey as the equal of money, so that he himself would become an author of a science fiction book (sci-fi) and receive the international “Nebula” award.

The astronaut agreed that he would give him the written text after a little time, but offered him a text written in an erroneous kind of Greek, like an epic composition of Homer, by that artificial animal polyglot, in order to be promoted better amongst learned men, confusing the present time with the 16th century.

The archivist brought this text to the author of this book, and asked him to translate it for him into the Czech language.

The author, however, described that he did not have the leisure time to translate the work, and therefore wished to return it to the archivist.

Nevertheless, when the author searched for the archivist, his companions said that he had died, and, praising him, said that the archivist himself knew several languages.

Which is why the author doesn't know whether it was the archivist Divíšek himself that composed the poem, or whether or it was the cosmic artificial animal.

Yet he decided to translate the text into Czech syllabotonic hexameters and to publish it with the original text, so that readers might believe that an epic composition in Greek about a star trek really existed.

And so, the poem is accompanied by a facing translation.

It is now necessary to add some things about the language of the epic composition here for the learned reader, male or female:

I suspect – as I stated earlier – that the cosmic skunk Franta didn't know the Greek language directly, but generated it and produced some strange forms in this manner.

The text of the poem contains some words (nouns, verbs) that can't be found in Greek poems, mostly because they express the ideas or concepts of “modern” or even future times, such as, of course, the various tools of astronauts, facts from science, astrophysics, and other related things.

Instead of these concepts or ideas, the poet has chosen either words from the contemporary Greek language, or “hellenizes” some “modern” international words (κομπουτήρ [computer], ρόβोटος [robot], etc.).

Our poet has either abbreviated or extended some words of this kind for the sake of meter and the example of Homer, as is frequently found in Homeric epics, but in ancient words (nouns, accents) (e.g. εἰλήλουθα for ἐλήλυθα, πουλὺς for πολὺς etc.) and not in neologisms as our poet has done, which is why examples cannot be found in the Master's work.

A similar thing must be said about various irregular [heteroclitic] forms of new nouns (e.g., ῥόβοτος, ῥοβότης, ῥοβότης, and even ῥόβως -οτος!), the multitude of which does not exceed those in Homer, yet these words and their alternate forms could not exist in ancient poems.

Furthermore, there are also certain forms on record of Ancient or original Greek words that aren't necessarily found in Homer, but are formed in analogy with the existing Homeric forms, such as some reduplicated aorists or alternative ways of declining: (e.g. ὁ πλάνης -ου next to πλάνης -ητος and πλάνητης -ου in analogy with μύκης -ου next to μύκης -ητος and other similar things). The poet even uses the word λύμφα to mean ὕδωρ in the modern way and other similar things.

Since these forms and strange words are in existing poems, to help the reader (male or female!) a small glossary is included at the end of the book, containing the unaccustomed words and forms that occur here, yet, because many words relate to contemporary things, the

equivalent words of explanation are not given in Latin but in English, since that language is the most international in modern times.

As for the prosody of the present poem, it is explicitly permitted for our poet to settle on the same licenses that he would use if he were Homer, which are sufficiently discussed in several introductions to Homer.

Such a freer mode has rules in Latin poems.

One of these Homeric licenses, however, is frequently omitted by compendiums, which is why I shall exhibit it here:

It is the *implicit reduplication of consonants that aren't written, but are pronounced*, thus creating an artificial position, such as e.g., in:

πάντες ἀριστεῖα πρόμον ἔμκεναι οὐνεκα καλὸν

(*Iliad* 3.44)

or:

εἰδὸς ἐ μείγθεός τε ψυήν τ' ἀρχιστᾶ εἴσκω

(*Odyssey* 6.152)

This license, if found in our poem, is signified by a horizontal line above the reduplicated letter, just as we have also done in the examples drawn out of Homer (μέγιστος , καλόν), thus indicating the correct way of scanning it.

Now that these things have been communicated, I now bid you farewell, excellent learned reader (male or female), and I hope that you (male or female) find this poem enjoyable.

Farewell, farewell

Ἰωάννης Παπαδόπουλος

Translator's Note

I have attempted to produce a faithful yet fluent translation of Křesadlo's sci-fi epic. I have not translated the Greek word-for-word but have tried to convey everything without adding more than necessary and have opted for idiomatic English prose, rather than verse. No pre-existing English translations have guided me,¹ but whenever I have been most lost, I have utilised Google Lens' (mostly poor) translation tool to reference the Czech translation provided in the 2023 publication of the Astronautilia.² This was not my go-to method, but it provided useful guidance towards solving the tricky sense of some of the verses (even if Google Lens hadn't grasped that sense itself). I have also referenced an Old Czech dictionary called the Elektronický slovník staré češtiny (ESSČ). ASP's transcription was the basis of my Greek text, but I have made many edits to fit my interpretation of Křesadlo's handwriting, and I have also provided a make-shift apparatus criticus to initially note some of these deviations, as well as providing lexical information on obscure word forms. I have also included my own notes on style and content.

¹ One has been written by Ben Broadbent, but at the time of writing this, I have not had access to it.

² Jan Křesadlo (2023) *Αστροναυτιλία: Hvězdoplavba*, Municipal Library of Prague.

Neznámého básníka:

HVĚZDOPLAVBA

aneb

Malá kosmická Odyssea

Z řeckého originálu
přeložil

Jan Křesadlo

Book A

[*Προοίμιον. τὰ περὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦντος καὶ περὶ
Μανδύος. Ἡ τῆς ἀστροναυτιλῆς ἀρχή.*]

Ἀρχόμενος πρῶτον Μουσῶν χορῷ εἰς Ἑλικῶνος³
 εὖχομαι ἐκπάγλως καὶ Ἀπόλλωνι ἄνακτι
 Μουσάων ἄρχοντι καλῷ ἰδὲ δαίμον' αἰοιδῶν
 ὄφρ' εἴποιεν ἐμὴν κόσμου γλαφυροῖο πόρευσιν,
 θαύματα πλανήτων καὶ ἀνδρῶν ὄμβριμα ἔργα, (5)
 οἷα τε δειξάμενοι πλέομεν δνόφερον διὰ χάσμα,
 πλοίαρχος μὲν ἐγὼ καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Ἔσπετε νῦν ἡμῖν τάδε, ὦ Θεός, ἡ ἐθέλιναι.
 Ποῦ ἀρχὴν γε λάβοιμι τίδε πρότερον καταλέξω; (10)
 Εἰρωτᾷς ὅτις εἰμί τέ μοι κλυτὸν οὔνομα ζητεῖς.
 Τοίγαρ ἐγὼ φήσω· ἐπεὶ ἐσσόμενός γε ἰκανῶ,
 οὐχὶ κεν ἐκφωνεῖν δύνασαις, χαλεπὸν δὲ τόδ' ἐστί.
 Ἀλλὰ γε εἵνεκα σεῖο θέλω ἐτέρως καλέσασθαι.
 Οὐδένα πλοίαρχόν περ ἐπὶ κλησιν κεκαλήσθω, (15)
 ὥς εἰν βίβλοισιν μυστηρικὸν ἄνδρα καλοῦσι
 τολμηρόν· *Νήμω καπιτᾶνον* Ῥωμαῖστί τε.
 Οὕτως μὲν κέλεσον μετατιθεῖς ἥματα πάντα.
 Ἀστυνόμος μὲν ἐγὼ ἐν ἐσσυμένῳ πτολιέθρῳ,
 κοίραμος ἀστυνόμων ἰδὲ καὶ ταγός· μοὶ δὲ πίθονται (20)
 πάντες ἀστυνόμοι ἐν Μητροπόλει καλιπύργῳ.
 Αὐτάρ μοι λύπη γέγονεν χαλεπὴ δέ τε πρῆξις.
 Ποῦ δ' ἀρχὴν γε λάβοιμι τίδε πρότερον καταλέξω;

³ cf. Hesiod's *Theogony* 1-4: μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' αἰεδεῖν [...] ὀρχεῦνται; Weise (2024:281) points instead to the opening line of pseudo-Homer's *Batrachomyomachia*, which I agree is a closer fit.

Book 1

[Proem: the events concerning the sheep who watches the universe and Mandys. The beginning of the Astronautilia:]

I start my prayer in great urgency first to the chorus of the Heliconian Muses, as well as to lord Apollo, the Muses' noble commander and guiding spirit of bards, so that they narrate my journey through the hollow cosmos, the wonders of the planets, and the mighty deeds of heroes, all the things that we accomplished when we were sailing through the murky chasm; when my trusty companions and I, the ship-captain, were seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the cosmos. Narrate these things for us now, oh god, ah goddesses! Where should I make my beginning, what should I recount first? You ask about my identity, and search for my glorious name. Well then, I'll tell you: it is a tongue-twister since I come from the future, so you would not be able to pronounce it. But for your sake I wish to be referred to in another manner. Let me be called 'ship-captain Oudeis', just as people refer to the daring and mysterious hero in books; And 'captain Nemo' in Latin. Refer to me by this translated name forevermore. I'm a policeman in a future citadel, the leader of police officers, and their ruler too; every cop in the Metropolis with the fair towers obey me. But sorrow and a harsh endeavour came upon me. Where should I make my beginning, and what shall I recount first?

- δυσμαθείς τόδε πρήγμα, ἔγωγε κακῶς συνήμι·
 ἐξισωσέας⁴ φασιν φυσικοῖσιν ἔνειναι (25)
 λυγράς· κβαντιακῆς γε θεωρίας ἀπόδειξιν
 αὐτὰρ γράμματα λυγρά γ' ἐξιώσων χαλεπαίνων
 δείκνυται ὥς τίδε δεῖ εἶναι ὄν κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Εἰ μὲν οὐτίς ἔη γε φύσις κόσμον ὁροῶσα
 κόσμος εὐρυπóρος οὐκ ἂν δυνάσαιτο ὑπάρχειν (30)
 οὐ χρόνος οὐ ζακενὸν⁵ οὐκ ὕλη οὔτε τι ἄλλο.
 Ἀλλὰ τι μὲν σκοπιῇν αἰὲν δεῖ ἔχειν παρατηροῦν.
 Τίς κεν ἀνθρώπων τὸ λάβειν θνητῶν δυνάσοιτο;
 οἶδε σοφοὶ ἐσόφιζον αἰεὶ περὶ κοσμοσκοπιῆς·
 τίς γε φύσις εἴη καὶ ζῶον κοσμοθεωροῦν (35)
 ἀλλ' οὐ δὴ τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο τοῖς φρονέουσιν.
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα τὸ πρήγμα φάνη συμβλήματι⁶ μούνφ.
 Ἔσκε δὲ τις ποιμήντοι ἐνὶ ὄρεσι σκιοέεσσι
 ὃς μὲν που βλώσκων ἐφυλάσσετο πίουα μῆλα.
 Μουσεῖον δὲ τοδ' ἔσκε γεωργίης⁷ προτ' εἰούσης (40)
 Σκάνσενα καὶ ἄνδρες μιν ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσι.
 Τίς οἱ ὄϊς πλάνωσεν⁸ ὁδῶ· κοτέων λάβε πέρην
 ῥῖψεν εἰς μῆλου⁹ κεφαλὴν βάλε οὐλοκάρηνον.

⁴ ASP's ἐξισωσεάς doesn't scan, probably a spelling mistake. It would make more morphological sense for Křesadlo to have ἐξισωσέας based on the noun's formation from ἐξισώω, but this doesn't scan either.

⁵ Křesadlo often abbreviates δια to ζα, thus διακενὸν.

⁶ = συμβόλον.

⁷ Křesadlo seems to have γεουργίης, which ASP also transcribes.

⁸ Likely from πλήν, an astronomical pun which equates the sheep to a 'wandering' planet (πλανήτης).

⁹ ASP has μῆλον, upsilons and nus are difficult to discern in handwritten Greek (υ/ν), but μῆλον being genitive singular makes the most sense here.

This deed is difficult to comprehend, I barely understand it myself. They say that the equations in physics are disastrous, and that their proof is quantum theory, furthermore, they say that the fatal words of those difficult equations demonstrate that there must be a being who watches the universe. For if there weren't a creature who keeps the universe in sight, then the broad-wayed universe would not have been able to come into existence, nor would have time, nor the vacuum of space, nor matter or anything else at all. But something must always be keeping watch, making careful observations. Who among mortal men could possibly grasp this? These scientists have often speculated about the observer of the cosmos, and what sort of living creature it could be that watches the universe, but no conclusion has been reached by those who've pondered this question. But then the being became evident from a single chance event. There was some shepherd in the thickly wooded mountains who kept guard over his plump sheep as he walked some place. And this was a museum to the agriculture of the past, which men also call a 'skansen'.¹⁰ One of the sheep wandered away from him; fed up, he picked up a rock, threw it at the sheep's head, and hit its woolly dome.

¹⁰ 'Skansen' is the name of Sweden's oldest **open-air museum** and in Central and Eastern Europe it became a generic term for one.

- Αὐτίκα συννοίη ἐ λίπεν¹¹, σκότος ὅσσε κάλυπεν.
 Ἐγρετο κωμάτοθεν φοίτησεν ὁδῷ σὺν ὅεσσιν (45)
 οὔτι μέγα φρονέων περὶ τῶν τάδε οἱ τύχεν ἀνδρί.
 Αὐτὰρ εἰν κώμῃ ὑπὸ τοῖς ὄρεσι σκιοέσσιν
 ἱητρός τις ἔναιεν ἀνήρ πάντας θεραπεύων
 ἄνδρας καὶ θήλεας αὐτῶν δ' ὕεας ὑιδέας τε.
 Τὸν μὲν μηλοβοτῆρ εἶδεν νούσου¹² πέρι ἄλλης (50)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τοῦ ὀμιλῶν εἶπεν τάδε καὶ περὶ μήλου.
 Αὐτὰρ ἱητρός ἀνήρ καιρὸν σκότεος ἐρέεινεν.
 Καὶ πεπυθόντα σέβας σφόδρον γ' ἔλε σείατο γυῖα
 πολλοὶ γὰρ ἦξαν σὺν αὐτοτάτῃ γὲ ἐπιμομφῇ
 ὥς καιρῷ ταυτῷ τοῖσιν σκότος ὅσσε κάλυπεν. (55)
 Αὐτὸς καὶ θεράπων πέσε κώμαδε τῇδ' ἐνὶ ὥρῃ.
 Οὗτος πρῆγμα φάνη γ' ἄρρητον¹³ καὶ φοβερὸν τε
 ἀλλ' οὔδεν περ ἔφη ταύτων τῷ μηλοβοτῆρι
 δώκε δὲ μιν χαπῖόντι¹⁴ δ' ἔπεμψε ἐ μηλοβοτεῖρην.
 Αὐτὰρ εἰρήνῃ ἐ λίπεν φρένας ἔν δέ οἱ ἦτορ (60)
 αἶεν μερμήριζε κυλίνδον δ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.
 Οὗτος μὲν θεράπων σοφὸν ἄνερα εἶχεν ἐταῖρον
 τοῦ γένεος *φυσικὸν* τὸν ἐπίκησιν καλέουσιν.
 Σὺν τῷ ὀμιλόμενος εἰν δώματι οἰνοπόταζεν
 ἐσπέριοις· κατέδου δ' ἀγνὸν φάος ἡελίοιο. (65)

¹¹ ASP has ἔλιπεν, but Křesadlo has clearly written ἐ λίπεν.

¹² ASP has νούσον, υ/ν.

¹³ This is a traditional way of writing double Rho.

¹⁴ ASP has γάμιόντι, which can't be the case, what ASP has as γ and μ are in fact χ and π. Τὸ χαπῖον is one of Křesadlo's coinages, but he seems to have given it an extra accent: χαπῖόντι. The acc. person and dat. obj. gives the literal trans. 'he gave/granted him to the pill', i.e., 'he prescribed him a pill', in the sense of granting permission.

Thought immediately abandoned him, and a darkness covered his eyes. He awoke from his deep slumber and kept plodding along his way with his sheep, not giving a second thought to what had just happened to him. But in the village beneath the thickly wooded mountains there lived a certain doctor who gave every man and woman medical attention, including their sons and daughters. The shepherd ended up seeing him for another illness, but he also told him about what happened with the sheep when they were talking. Then the doctor asked him about the precise moment he fainted. And a strong sense of awe seized him when he found out and his limbs trembled, because many people had come to him with the exact same complaint that a darkness had covered their eyes at the very same moment. The doctor himself also fell into a deep sleep at this same moment. This unspeakable and fearful creature became clear, but he told the shepherd none of this at all, wrote him a prescription for a pill and sent him off to tend to his sheep. But peace abandoned his mind, and his heart was unceasingly in doubt while tossing back and forth. This doctor had a wise colleague, the kind they call a 'physicist'. He was drinking wine with him at his house, and making conversation as the sun's holy light set in the evening.

Ἀλλά τέ οἱ εἶπεν περὶ μήλου¹⁵ ἡέ¹⁶ βοτῆρος
 κώματος ὡς πᾶσιν τοι ἔπι σκότος ὅσσε κάλυπεν
 τῷ γ' ἀκαρεῖ τῷ μηλοβοτῆρ βάλ' ὄϊν κατὰ κράτος.
 Γήθησεν δὲ σοφός τε σέβας ἔλε· εἶδετο δ' αὐτὸς
 ὡς τόδε μὲν πρόβατον ζῶον τ' ἦν κοσμοθεωροῦν, (70)
 αὐτίκα τῷ θεράποντι θέσιν τέθηκε νομίζων.
 Ἐξαῦτίς τοι ἔβαν εἰς οὔρεα¹⁷· ἤγετο¹⁸ δ' αἰνῶς
 ὀρμὴ μυστηρῶν ἰδὲ καὶ φιλοπευθησίη.
 Τονδ' εὔρον μετὰ πυρκαιῇ· πέρι πίονα μῆλα
 βληχάετ' οὐλοφέροντά τε καὶ βοτάνην κατέδοντα, (75)
 καὶ τὸν μηλοβοτῆρ' ἔπεσιν προσέφαν¹⁹ πτεροέσσι
 μῆλον ζητοῦντες τὸ βάλεν στερεοῖο λίθοιο.
 Ἀυτὰρ δεῖξεν ἀνὴρ καὶ μῆλον οὐ²⁰ ἐλάθησεν.
 Τοὶ μὲν ἐπεσσύμενοι ἔλαβον· μάλα θῆρ μέγας ἦεν
 καὶ τότε μιν φιάλην θῆκαν ὑπο ὑαλοέσσαν (80)
 κημῶ²¹· ὑπνοτικός καπνὸς τῇδ' ὄρνυτο στάμνῳ.
 Αὐτίκα δ' ἀμφοτέροιν ὀλοῆς²² σκότος ὅσσε κάλυπεν
 τῆμος μυστηρὶς γὰρ ὅϊς ἠγειρεν ἔπειτα²³.

¹⁵ ASP has μήλον, but it must be gen. since the acc. form doesn't scan properly, υ/υ.

¹⁶ Křesadlo has clearly written ἡε, but this form doesn't seem to exist in any dictionary, so I believe it is a misspelling, hence ἡέ.

¹⁷ ASP has αὔρεα.

¹⁸ Probably from ἡγέομαι (unattested), shortened from ἡγέετο? Could also be a misspelling of ἤγετο, but that obscures the sense of the clause.

¹⁹ From πρόσφημι.

²⁰ ASP has αἰ.

²¹ Křesadlo has clearly written κημνῶ, but I can't find this word in any dictionaries, so I've transcribed κημῶ.

²² Difficult to fit into the verse, nothing else in the line is nom. pl.

²³ Sense of verse is difficult to discern, τῆμος ἔπειτα probably mean 'until', but I'm unsure about how γὰρ works here.

And he told him about the sheep, the herdsman, and the deep sleep: how a darkness concealed everyone's eyes within a hair's breadth of the moment that the shepherd hit the sheep on the head. The wise man rejoiced, and a sense of awe seized him; he knew that this sheep was the being who watches the universe, and immediately put his thesis to the doctor, fully believing it. They went back into the mountains and were exceedingly driven by the compulsion to know the secrets of the universe as well as by curiosity. They found him by a fire, surrounded by fat sheep as the woolly creatures bleated and feasted on grass, and they addressed the shepherd with winged words, seeking the sheep which he had thrown the hard rock at. Then the man showed them the sheep and didn't hide it away. Charging at it, they caught her, but the beast was too strong and when they placed a glass bowl under its muzzle, a hypnotic smoke rose out from the jar. And a fatal darkness immediately concealed both their eyes until the mystic sheep woke back up.

Τῇ γὰρ οὐ σκοπεύσῃ ἅπαντα δ' ἄφαντα γέγοντο
 θῆρες²⁴, ἄνθρωποι καὶ κοινῶς πρήγματα πάντα (85)
 πάντα γ' ὀπόσσα²⁵ δ' ἔνεστι ἐνὶ κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν
 καὶ χρόνος καὶ ζακενόν²⁶ τε ἐνεργεῖ τε καὶ ὕλη.
 Ἄλλ' ὥς μὲν πρόβατον ἡγείρεν κοσμοθεωροῦν
 αὐτίκα πρήγματα πάντα φάνη καὶ ἦσαν ἐξαῦτις²⁷
 καὶ χρόνος καὶ ζακενόν τε ἐνεργεῖ καὶ ὕλη, (90)
 πάντα γ' ὀπόσσα δ' ἔνεστι ἐνὶ κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν,
 ἱητρός τε σοφός τε καὶ ἀνὴρ μηλοβοτεῖρος
 μῆλα τε πυρκαϊή τ' ἰδὲ καὶ ὄρεα σκιοέντα.
 Γήθησαν δὲ σοφοὶ ὥς εὗρηκαν τὸ θεωροῦν
 ἔρμα τὸ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ οὐσίην ἐλόγισαν. (95)
 Αὐτίκα πεπραμένην ἀπὸ βουτῆρος λάβον αὐτήν,
 γηθόσυνοι ἔφερόν μιν ἐϋκτίμενονδε δόμονδε.
 Ἄρχοντας πρῶτον τοὶ χώρην κοιρανέουσιν
 τηλεφωνοῦντες προσέφαν καὶ ἀγγελίσαντο.
 Θαυμάσιον γὰρ ἦν καὶ ὄβριμον²⁸ καὶ φοβερόν τε (100)
 ἶσχειν καὶ κρατέειν ζῶον τόδε κοσμοθεωροῦν.

²⁴ The sentence makes sense but doesn't scan properly, Křesadlo also seems to have written an extra letter (η) before θῆρες, but the line wouldn't scan regardless, since -ες (short by nature) is enclosed by a long by nature (θῆρ-) and a long by position (ἄνθ-). ASP also transcribes θῆρες.

²⁵ Křesadlo has clearly written ὀποσσα, but this accentuation is incorrect (?). cf. 91 & 104.

²⁶ ζα/δια, cf. 90 & 105, plus note 4.

²⁷ ASP has ἐφαῦτις.

²⁸ Křesadlo has clearly written ὄμβριμον, but this doesn't work and doesn't scan. The Czech offers 'vast', which fits with the meaning of ὄβριμος.

Since everything disappeared when she wasn't looking, namely animals, people, and every object in general – everything that exists within the depths of the universe, such as time, the vacuum of space, energy, and matter. But when the sheep who watches the universe woke back up, all things immediately became visible once again, including time, the vacuum of space, energy, matter, everything that exists within the depths of the universe, including the doctor, the scientist, the shepherd, the sheep, the fire, and the thickly wooded mountains. And these scientists were delighted that they had discovered the watcher, the being that props up the cosmos, and they considered its essence. After being bought from the herdsman, they immediately took her and joyfully carried her to a well-built house. First, they spoke and reported the news on the phone to those in charge who manage the country. Since it is a strange, burdensome, and fearful mission to secure this creature who watches the universe and keep her in check.

Τῷ περ ἔχοντι τὸ μῆλον ἰδὲ κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον
 κόσμου σύμπαντος· κτάμεναι μὲν ἐπεὶ κράτος ἔσχεν
 πάντα δ' ὀπόσσα δ' ἔνεστιν ἐνὶ κόσμιοι βάθεσσι
 καὶ χρόνον καὶ ζακενὸν²⁹ καὶ ἐνεργεῖν τε καὶ ὕλην. (105)
 Κοίρανος³⁰ τῶν πάντων κρατέων πρόβατον ἀφίκανεν
 ἐκβιάζειν δύναται πάντας· μούνως³¹ γε καὶ αὐτὸς
 ζῶην ὠλώση εἴ κεν πρόβατον γε φονεῖη
 Τοῦνεκα τοῖς ἄρχουσι περὶ προβάτον κατέλεξαν.
 Οὕτως μοι λύπη γέγονεν χαλεπὴ δέ τε πρῆξις. (110)
 Ἀστυνόμοι πρόβατον ἐφύλασσαν κοσμοθεωροῦν³²
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ δ' αὐτῶν κοίρανος³³ καὶ ἀστυνόμαρχος
 ἀστυνόμων πάντων φυλακῇ τότε ὑπαίτιος ἦα.
 Τούτῳ μοι κεφαλὴ πῆμαινε φύγεν δέ τε ὕπνος
 πολλὰ γὰρ εἰς φυλακὴν τέθηκα τὰ τεχνικὰ ἔργα (115)
 ὅσσα περ ἐκτίσαντο ἰδίησιν πραπίδεςσιν
 ἄνδρες· τηλεόραμά³⁴ τε καὶ εὐρήματα καινὰ
 ὄμματα μὲν καὶ ὄτα δὲ καὶ αἰσθήματα ἄλλα
 τεχνικά· τοῖσι δὲ πᾶσι τεχνήμασι ἡγεμόνευσε
 κομπουτῆρ δυνατὸς εἶδως προγράμματα πυκνά³⁵. (120)
*[Κομπουτῆρα δέ μιν βρύθανες ἄνδρες καλέουσιν
 ἀλλὰ δέ μιν Δαναοὶ καλέουσιν ὑπολογιστήν.]*
 Οὗτος κομπουτῆρ τεχνήμασι ἡγεμόνευσεν
 αἰσθητήρεσι πᾶσι τε καὶ κλέϊσιν κρατερῆσιν
 οὔτις θυητὸς ἀνὴρ πρόβατον κλέψαι γε δύναται. (125)

²⁹ ζα/δια.

³⁰ Křesadlo and ASP both have κοίραμος; line doesn't scan properly.

³¹ ASP has μάνως.

³² ASP has κοσμοθεωραῖν.

³³ Křesadlo has clearly written κόραμος, but this doesn't make sense.

³⁴ Křesadlo's coinage for 'television'.

³⁵ ASP has μυκνά.

The one who possesses the sheep would also possess the greatest power over the whole entire universe. Since he'd possess the power to destroy everything that exists within the depths of the universe, such as time, the vacuum of space, energy, and matter. The one who possesses the sheep would become the master of everything and gain the power to exert their will on all things; only, he would lose his life as well if he were to murder the sheep, which is why they told those in charge all about the sheep.

Thus, sorrow and a harsh endeavour came upon me. The police officers guard the sheep who watches the universe, but I, their master and chief officer of all police officers, was responsible for the guarding at that time. Thus, my head ached, and sleep fled from me. For I introduced to the patrol as many technical works as men have invented in mind alone. Television and novel inventions, eyes and ears, as well as other artificial means of perception. And a powerful computer which knows densely constructed programs leads the way for all these technical devices. (British men call it a 'computer', but the Danaans call it a 'hypologistes'). This computer led the way for technical devices: for all the sensors and mighty locks. No mortal man could possibly steal the sheep.

Οὕτως μὲν φρόνεον, τόδε νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησα
 ὥς τε κακὴ με τύχη βεβάλει³⁶ καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή³⁷.
 Ἔσκε δέ τις ἀνὴρ ἠλεκτρονικὰ φρεσὶν εἰδὼς
 ἔμπειρος, τῶν τοὺς καὶ “ἔξπερτας” καλέουσιν.
 Τούτος εἰν φυλακῇ μήλου κλέϊσιν ὑπέρηρχεν (130)
 αἰσθητήρεσι πᾶσι καὶ αὐτῷ ὑπολογιστῇ
 Μανδῦς ἔχων ὄνομα· Μανδὺν δέ ἐ κικλήσκοντο³⁸
 ἄνδρες ἄρχοντες ἰδὲ τοῦ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι.
 Ἐχθιστος ῥ’ ὁδ’ ἀνὴρ φυλακὴν οἶος ἐπέβησεν.
 Κυφὸς ἔην χολὸς δ’ ἕτερον πόδα τῷ δ’ ἐπὶ κρᾶτον³⁹ (135)
 λίσσον καὶ στροβιλώδες ἔην τοι ἀτὰρ δέ τε ῥῖνα
 πάμμεγαν αὐτὸς ἔχεσκεν ἕως⁴⁰ σύκιον ῥοδοέντα
 τῷ δέ οἱ ὀφθαλμῷ σφαίρης μακρῆσιν εἵκτη⁴¹
 τῆσιν μὲν παῖδες σμικροὶ παίζουσιν ἐπ’ ἄγρῳ.
 Οὕτως Μανδῦς ἔην ἔχθιστος ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν (140)
 οἵτινες εἰς φυλακὴν ἦλθον οἶος ἐνορώσης.
 πολλὰκι μὲν Μανδὺν κάγχαζον ἄνερες ἄλλοι
 τοῦδ’ εἰδούς ἔνεκα· Τόδε μὲν ἀκάχησε φίλον κῆρ.
 αὐτὰρ τοῖσι τίσιν εὔρεν κακὰ βυσσοδομεύων⁴²,

³⁶ Probably a pseudo-perfect form of βάλλω.

³⁷ Iliadic idiom, cf. 5.83, 5.629, 16.334, 16.853, 20.477, etc.

³⁸ From καλέω: epic iterative with reduplication in the perfect, we would expect κεκ- not κικ-; for iterative cf. *Iliad* 9.562, Hesiod *Theogony* 207.

³⁹ Κυφός cf. *Odyssey* 2.16 of the aged Aegyptius; χολός δ’ ἕτερον πόδα cf. *Iliad* 2.217 of the ‘ugly’ Thersites; κρᾶτον = κράς, i.e., κάρα (κέφαλη).

⁴⁰ Sense is obscure, the Czech implies εἰκώς, which is what I follow here.

⁴¹ Dual 3rd person perfect of ἔουκα.

⁴² Always with negative connotations in Homer, cf. *Odyssey* 4.676 (the suitors), 8.273 (Hephaestus), 9.316 (Polyphemos), 17.66 (the suitors), 17.465 (Antinous), 20.184 (Odysseus).

Or so I thought, which is why I – fool that I am – didn't recognise that misfortune and resistless fate had struck me. There was a certain man who was well acquainted with electronics,⁴³ one of those people they call an 'expert'. This man kept guard over the sheep's locks, all the sensors, even the computer itself. Mandys⁴⁴ is what he was called, the men in charge called him Mandys, and so did his faithful companions. And so, this most hateful man presided over the guarding of the sheep. He was hunchbacked, lame in one foot, and his head was bald and cone-shaped, moreover, this man had a very big nose that resembled a red fig, and his eyes resembled the large balls which little children play with in a field. Thus, Mandys was the most hateful being amongst all the men who had ever come into the guard of the perceptive sheep. Mandys was often mocked by the other men for his appearance, which pained his dear heart. However, he devised something against them, planning evil things in the depths of his soul,

⁴³ Lit. 'there was a man who was familiar with electronics in his heart, an expert...', cf. *Iliad* 2.301, *Odyssey* 2.231.

⁴⁴ Peter Pišťánek notes in the afterward to Křesadlo's novel *Gravelarks* that it is 'no coincidence' that the villain of the *Astronautilia*, Mandys, and Křesadlo's personal antagonist and Czech literary critic, Pavel Mandys, have the exact same name (Pišťánek 2009 in Křesadlo 2015:213).

πάντεσσιν φυλάκεσσιν ὅσοι μῆλον γ' ἐφύλασσον (145)
 πᾶσι γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι ὅλως δέ τε χρήμασι πᾶσι.
 Τὸ πρόβατον μὲν κλέψεν ιδίησιν πραπίδεσσιν
 εἰδὼς σχήματα πάντα τὰ δ' ἐν φυλακῇ φυλάσσοντο
 τεχνικά· καὶ ἀνδρῶν φυλάκων φυλάκεσσιν ἀμοιβάς.⁴⁵
 Ἐκ πλοῖου κόσμοιο φόρεν ὄϊν· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα (150)
 ὄρμησεν ἄστρον κελανὴν εὐεργία νῆα
 ἔπτατο εἰς κόσμον λελιπὼς γῆν πουλυβοτέρην⁴⁶.
 Ἐνθεν μοι λύπη γέγονεν χαλεπὸν δέ τε πρῆγμα
 ὥς δέ τε μοι κόραμοι⁴⁷ ἄνδρες μάλα χῳώσαντο⁴⁸.
 Πρῶτον μὲν με θέλον κριτῆσιν ἀνδράσι ῥῖψαι (155)
 οἷ μὲν κρίσαιεν καὶ εἰς ἐρκτὴν με βάλοιεν
 πολλοὺς πρὸς λυκάβαντας ἰδὲ πρὸς γ' ἤματα πολλὰ
 βρώμην δυσειδὴν φάγεμεν δεσμοῖσι λυγροῖσιν,
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι ἐλέησαν ἐπεὶ ἔταρος σφισὶν ἡά
 ἥλλαξαν βουλὴν ἄλλη δέ τε φαίνετο μῆτις. (160)
 Ἐν πλοίῳ πεμψαν αἰσχροὺς κόσμονδε κενόνδε
 αὐτὸν πλοιάρχον σὺν ἄλλοισιν φυλάκεσσιν
 οἷ περ κλεφθῆναι ἔασαν ὄϊν κοσμοορώσῃν,
 αὐστηρῶς δ' ἐπίτελλον ἀνάμνησάν τε βαρεῖα⁴⁹
 μήτ' ἀπονοστήσειν πρὶν Μανδὺν ὄϊν τε λάβεσθαι. (165)

⁴⁵ The sense in lines 148-9 is difficult to make out.

⁴⁶ = πολύβοσκος.

⁴⁷ = κοίρανος.

⁴⁸ = χῳόμαι.

⁴⁹ The sense is slightly obscure, the Czech offers '*placed a heavy burden on my heart*'.

against all the guards who watch over the sheep, against all mankind and against everything in general. He stole the sheep with his private thoughts, by being familiar with all the schematics and technical things that the guards keep watch over, as well as the shift-changes from guard to guard. He carried the sheep from the spaceship, but then he hastened the dark, well-wrought ship towards the stars and flew into the cosmos, abandoning the much-nourishing earth. Then sorrow and a harsh endeavour came upon me, because the men in charge grew very angry with me. First, they wanted to throw me to the judges, who would bring me to trial and throw me in prison for many years and for many days I'd have to eat disgusting food in wretched chains, but they showed me pity because I was their friend. They changed their minds and came up with another course of action. They sent me on a ship as the ship's captain into the terribly empty universe along with the other guards who had allowed the sheep who watches the universe to be stolen. They gave me strict orders and reminded me that my burden was to not return home until Mandys and the sheep were caught.

Ὡς οἱ ἔφαν· ἡμῖν δὲ κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ⁵⁰.
 ὄμβριμα μὲν σκοπέουσι κενοῦ διαστήματα κόσμου
 μικρὸν καὶ Μανδῦν δὲ οἷν τ' ἄπορον δέ τε ἔργον.
 τῶν μὲν ἐγὼ λισόμην κοράμων ὑψηλὰ κάρηνα
 ἄμμε δὲ μὴ πέμψαι κόσμοιο κενοιο βάθος δὲ (170)
 ἀνόπλους δέ τ' ἀνηρτομένους πρὸς ἤματα πάντα.
 τοῖσι δὲ λισσόμενος τελέως πεῖθον θράσυμον κῆρ
 δῶκαν ἀμύμονα ὅπλα τὰ μὲν *φείσρους* καλέουσιν
 ἀκτίνων ὀλοῶν βεβλήματα οἷά τε πάντες
 ἐν σαῖ-φαῖ βίβλους ἄστηρονέοντες ἔχουσιν (175)
 μικρὰ δὲ τουφεκίοισιν⁵¹ ἐοικότα ἢ ἐ τὰ μακρὰ
 τηλεβόλοις ὅπλοισι⁵² ἔϊκτεα ὡς ἐπέοικεν
 νηὶ γ' ἔχειν ἢ περ πορά⁵³ διαστήματα κόσμου.
 Δῶκαν καὶ ζῶον πλαστὸν πυκινῶς περ ἀρηρὸς
 τεχνομένον· τὸ γὰρ ἔσκε γαλῆ κακῶδει ἐοικὸς (180)
 ἦν *Μέφριτιν μέφριτιν* μὲν ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέουσι
 ζωολόγοι· ἀτὰρ οἱ κοινοὶ *σκοῦγκον* καλέουσι.
 ἦν δὲ ὁ παντομεταθήτωρ πυκινὰ φρεσὶν εἰδὼς
 ὃς ἤδη γλώσσας πόλλας κόσμου γλαφυροῖο
 οἷα δὲ μυθοῦνται φύσεις πολλοῖς πλανήτης (185)
 τῶν δ' ἑκατομμυρίους ἤδη πλαστὸν τόδε ζῶον.

⁵⁰ Κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ is always used of Odysseus and/or his crew, cf. *Odyssey* 4.481, 4.538, 9.256, 10.198, 10.496, 10.566, 12.277.

⁵¹ Modelled on the modern Greek word for 'rifle', τουφέκι.

⁵² '*Far-striking weapons*', i.e., canons.

⁵³ Unclear, connected to πόσος perhaps?

So they spoke, and our dear hearts shattered, when they saw the mighty span of the empty cosmos, as well as little Mandys and the sheep and the unmanageable task. I for my part begged the lofty headed rulers not to send us into the depth of the empty cosmos, unarmed and unprepared for the future. And I finally swayed their bold hearts by begging. They gave us excellent weapons that they called ‘phasers’:⁵⁴ casters of destructive beams that every astronaut has in sci-fi books; small ones that resemble rifles or large ones that resemble cannons⁵⁵, as is proper for a ship that traverses such great spans of the universe to have. They also gave us a counterfeit animal which was very well constructed through artificial means, for it resembled that stinky weasel which zoologists refer to by the name ‘Mephitis mephitis’,⁵⁶ but ordinary people call it a ‘skunk’. He was a universal translator, who knew complex things in his mind, and already knew the many languages of the cavernous universe which creatures on many planets speak in: this counterfeit animal knew millions of them already.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ After the Star Trek weapon of the same name.

⁵⁵ Probably referencing Phase/Plasma Cannons from Star Trek.

⁵⁶ i.e., the striped skunk.

⁵⁷ A translator in the form of the skunk comes from Stanisław Lem, as mentioned on p.xii & xv (specifically his 1959 story *Invasion from Aldebaran*, cf. p.62 [trans. Lloyd-Jones 2022] on ‘*The Peripatetic Telepatric*’ (Pe-Te for short) which resembles a skunk in appearance and is comprised by “*fleshy cells of Semantic Memory*”).

Τὸν μὲν *Φράνκισκον* κάλεον βραχέως δέ τε *Φράντην*
 πάμπας ὃ σχεδὸν ἔσκε τετυγμένος ἐκ κύστησιν
 ὅσσαι ἐγκεφάλῳ ἀνθρωπεῖῳ τοι ἔνεστι
 ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ τρόφιμον σύστημα συνισμένον⁵⁸ ἦεν (190)
 ὥς μούνως τρέφετο σμικοῖς τροφίμοις χαπιοῖσιν·
 τοῦνεκα γὰρ γλώσσας ἑκατομμυρίους γνῶ πάσας.
 Δῶκαν καὶ Τόνδην ρόβοτον πυκινὰ φρεσὶν εἶδεν
 τεχνικὰ πρήγματα πάντα τὸ γὰρ ἦν θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι
 ὅττι δ' ἐπίσκαζοι εἴ κεν κεκακημένον εἶη (195)
 πρήγμα τι τοῖς πολλοῖς ἃ δ' ἐνὶ πλοίῳ ἐνέασιν.
 Ἄμμι τε μὲν πύματόν γε καὶ ἱητῆρα δέδωκαν
 ἄνδρα ὃδ' ἰήσῃ νούσους καὶ πήματα πάντα
 ναυτῶν· κοράμιον ὃδ' ἀνὴρ ἐβίασε θύγατρα
 καὶ μιν ἐκ τίσεος πέμψαν παρ' ἀπείρονα κόσμον (200)
 τοῦ δ' Ἑλέφας ὄνομ' ἔσκε τε καὶ *Ἑλέφαντα* κάλησαν
 πάντες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι.
 Αὐτό γε τὸ πλοῖον δὲ δόσαν κακὸν οὔτι νέον περ
 ἀλλὰ μὲν ἀρχαῖκὸν βλαβερόν δέ τε ἀστροπορεύειν.
 Τόνδα δέ μιν ρόβοτός περ ἐπίσκασε ὥς ἐδύναντο (205)
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς χαλεπὸν σφαλερόν γ' ἦν κοσμοπορεύειν.

⁵⁸ Obscure, the Czech offers 'stunted'.

We called him František, or Franta for short, and he was almost entirely constructed from the cells which are found in the human brain,⁵⁹ but his trophic system was stunted, so he could only gain sustenance from small food pills. Which is why he knew many millions of languages. They also gave us the robot Tonda,⁶⁰ who was well acquainted with complicated things (all the kinds of technical things which are a marvel to behold), so that he could repair anything on the ship if it were to break. Lastly, they also gave us a doctor, so that he could heal all the sailors' sicknesses and pains. This man had had his way with the ruler's daughter, and they sent him along with us into the infinite cosmos out of vengeance. His name was Elephas⁶¹ and he was called Elephas by all people, including my trusty companions. But the very ship they gave us was shoddy: it wasn't a new model, but an old-fashioned one,⁶² not safe for a journey amongst the stars. The robot Tonda repaired it as best he could, but even so, it was dangerously fallible for a journey through the cosmos.

⁵⁹ i.e., neurons.

⁶⁰ Affectionate diminutive of Antonín, like 'Tony'.

⁶¹ i.e., 'Elephant, tusk, ivory'.

⁶² A sentence laden with meta-poetic imagery of New vs. Old. Not a ship construction episode like we get in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*.

Τόλμα δὲ κλῆσιν ἔχεν καὶ *Τόλμα* ἐ κικλήσκοντο
 ἄνερες· Ναὶ μὰ περ ἦν μακρὴ τλῆσις ἐπιβῆναι.
 ἡμεῖς δ' αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα τὰ πολλὰ δ' ὀπλισάμεθ' ἔργα
 νῆα μὲν εὐξέστην ἐπιβήσαμεν ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ⁶³. (210)
 Αὐτίκα πυραυλός⁶⁴ γ' ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπτάμεθ'⁶⁵ εἰς κόσμον λελιπάντες μητέρα γαῖαν.
 Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.

⁶³ cf. *Iliad* 7.428, 7.431, 19.57, 23.165, 23.284, 23.443, 24.773;
Odyssey 10.67, 12.153, 12.250, 12.270, 22.188, 24.420.

⁶⁴ From modern Greek πύραυλος, lit. 'fire flute/pipe'.

⁶⁵ Křesadlo has written ἑπταμεθ'.

Tolma was her name, and men named her Tolma. Yes, truly it took a lot of daring⁶⁶ to board her! However, we then readied many things in preparation, and boarded the well-polished ship, while grieving in our hearts. The rocket propelled the beautifully-constructed ship at once, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving Mother Earth behind us. From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

⁶⁶ ‘Tolma’ means ‘daring, courage, bold, reckless’ in Greek.

Book B

[Τὰ περὶ τῶν λεσβιακῶν]

Αὐτὰρ ὡς πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἥελιον ξεῖνόν τοι ἀφίκομεθ' ἢ ἐπερίσσον
 ξεῖναι πλανήται δὲ περιστροφέοντο δ' αὐτόν.
 Τούτων πλανήτων ἔν ἀφικόμεθ' ὅστε πεφάνθη (5)
 γαίης ἡμετέρης παρόμοιος· τῷ μὲν ἄνωθεν
 ἐσσυμένοι ζαπέδῳ ἔχομεν καλεργέα νῆα.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐτάρω κρίνας δῶ ἔξοχ' ἀρίστω
 πέμψα γε τὴν χωρήνδ' ἔμεναι ἰδὲ καὶ σκοπέεσθαι
 αἵτινες οὐσίαι εἶην χθονὶ βρώματ' ἔδουσαι (10)
 εἷ περ ἀγριόθυμοι ὑπερφίαλοί τε κακαὶ τε
 ἢ ἐφιλόξενοι καὶ θυμόν γ' ⁶⁷ ἡδὺν ἔχουσai
 οἷδ' αἶψ' οἰχόμενοι ξεῖνον εὖρον πτολίεθρον
 αὐτίκα δ' εἵσηλθον τόδ' ἐϋξέστησι πύλῃσι.
 Ἄλλ' εἰσερχομένους ἔνδον ἔλεν αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος. (15)
 Τὸν μὲν πλανήτην περ ἐναίετο φῦλα γυναικῶν
 λεσβιακῶν αἷ ἄνδρας ἅπαντας ⁶⁸ ἐστυγένοντο.
 Ταὶ μὲν ἀναΐξασαι ἔλοντ' ἐρήφρας ἐταίρους
 καὶ βασανίσασαι ἐφόνουν νηληϊ μετὰλλω
 ἀλλὰ σφας περὶ νηὸς ἐρώτησαν ἐϋτύκτης (20)
 καὶ ἡμῶν· τάδε δύστηνοι κατέλεξαν ἅπαντα.
[Καὶ γὰρ λεσβιακῇσι γυναιξὶν ἔην μεταφρήζων⁶⁹
πάγκοινος ὃ γ' ἐπιστάμενος καὶ ῥήματα φωτῶν.]

⁶⁷ ASP has θυμούμ'.

⁶⁸ Křesadlo has written ἅπανας.

⁶⁹ The verb μεταφράζω is used only once in Homer (*Iliad* 1.140) to mean 'afterthought' not 'translate'.

Book 2

[The events concerning the lesbian women.]

But as we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the cosmos, we arrived at a strange and overmassive sun, with strange planets orbiting around it. Of these planets, we came across one that appeared to closely resemble our Earth, and darting to the ground from above, we moored the beautifully-constructed ship. But, after picking out two of my best companions, I sent them to visit the country and see what kinds of food-eating beings there are in the country, whether they are wild, arrogant, and base, or friendly and kind-hearted. Quickly departing, they discovered a strange city and entered it immediately through the well-polished gates. But utter destruction⁷⁰ took them as they entered. This planet was settled by a race of lesbian women who abhorred all men. Having leapt up, they captured my trusty companions, and murdered them with pitiless metal after torturing them. But they asked them about our well-built ship and about us, and those unfortunate fellows recounted it all. [For the lesbian women had a universal translator as well who also knew the words of my men.]

⁷⁰ Homeric idiom, cf. *Iliad* 11.174, 11.441, 12.345, 12.358, 13.773, 17.155, 17.244; *Odyssey* 5.305, 22.28. (I'm providing nominative examples only).

- ἦμος λεσβιακαὶ θήλυες μέμαθον περὶ ἀνδρῶν
 γήθησαν καὶ ἄμμιν ὅπλισαν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον. (25)
 Αὐτίκα ἀμφιένησαν ἱμάντια καλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ
 δακτυλίους χρυσέους τ' ὄρμους τ' ἀρτήματα πολλὰ
 χαίτας κτείνισαν καὶ χεῖλεα φυκοοῶσαν
 Βὰν δ' ἵμεναι πρὸς νῆα μέλαιναν χῆρα φέρουσαι.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ἀφίκοντο τόπον καὶ νῆα μέλαιναν (30)
 ἔστηκαν δ' ἔξω καὶ ἀείσασαν ὅπῃ καλῇ
 ὥς ἀσπαζόμεναι γλυκερῶς καὶ μειδιάσασαι.
 Τὰς μὲν βλέψαντες τὸ τεταρπώμεθα φίλον κῆρ
 αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ νηὸς βῆμεν δίχα ὅπλα χαμαῖζε.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα λεσβιακαὶ γε θέλον φιλότῃ μιγῆναι (35)
 ἀλλὰ γ' ἐρυσσάμεναι πυκινῶν κωπεῖς παρὰ μηρῶν
 τὰς μὲν λάθρα φέρον ὑπ' εἵμασι ποικιλοέσσειν
 ἀφράκτους ἄμμ' ἀνδρας ἀνόπλους ληΐσαντο
 καὶ καταρηομένους ἦγον πόλιν οὐκ ἐθέλοντας.
 Ἐνθα δ' ἀφικόμεναι εἰργμὸν λυγρόνδε βάλοντο (40)
 ἡμᾶς δυστήνους πυκινοῖς χαράκεσσ' ἀραρόντα
 σήματι τῷ τῷ θῆρες ὀρεσκῶι⁷¹ κατέχονται
 ἀσφαλὰ· κλουβί δέ μιν καλέουσι νεώτεροι ἄνδρες
 τῷ μὲν λεσβιακαὶ θήλυες γ' ἡμᾶς ἐφύλασσον
 μέσσους εἰν ἀγορῇ· ἀπέβαν δέ τε κηρυχθῆναι (45)
 σάλπιγξιν μεγάλῃσι τε τύμπανα τυμπανέουσαι.

⁷¹ An epithet usually for centaurs, cf. *Iliad* 1.268; cf. also *Odyssey* 9.155 of an αἶξ.

When the lesbian women learnt about us men, they rejoiced and prepared to utterly destroy us. They immediately put on fair and costly clothes, golden rings, necklaces, and many earrings, they combed their long hair and painted their lips red, and left to come to our black ship, bringing death along with them. But when they arrived at the place our black ship was, they stood outside and sang with fair voices, as if they were welcoming us and smiling sweetly. We were delighted in our hearts when we saw them, and we immediately disembarked from the ship on to the ground, without any weapons. But then the lesbian women didn't want to mingle with us in love, But, after drawing out from their closed thighs their swords which they carried hidden away under their colourful garments, they carried us off as booty, defenceless and unarmed, and brought us back to the city, cursing and without consent. And they threw us wretched souls into a miserable cage when they arrived, furnished with closely packed bars in the token manner by which mountain-dwelling beasts are held in captivity, and what more recent men call a 'kloubi'.⁷² The lesbian women kept us under guard in one of them in the middle of their forum, and left to proclaim our arrival with a large trumpet and by beating their drums.

⁷² Κλουβί is the modern Greek name for a cage.

Αὐτὰρ λεσβιακαὶ δ' ἔκβαινον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλη
 εἰς ἀγορὴν πτόλεος πυνθανέμεναι ὅτι δ' εἴη.
 Ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἔνωρτο γέλως λέσβησι γυναιξιν
 ὥς ἴδον εἰργμομένους δεσμύμασιν ἄνδρας ἀγαυοὺς (50)
 εἰν ἀγορῇ· τότε τῇσι οἶσατο χάρμα μέγιστον.
 Ἐχθροὶ μὲν τῇσιν φῶτες καὶ ἄρσενά θηρῶν
 πάντα· μέγα φθονέουσι γυναῖκες μῆδεα φωτῶν.⁷³
 Αὐτίκα ἄνδρε δύω ταχέως κλουβίφιν ἔλουσai
 εἵμασιν ἐκδυσαν ἰδὲ καὶ λυγρῶς βασάνισαν (55)
 δηρόν· ἐξ ὄθροιο⁷⁴ γ' ἐς ἡέλιον καταδύντα
 σμέρδαλα στενάχοντε· ἀτὰρ λέσβαι τε γυναῖκες
 ἀμφὶ καθιζόμεναι θήησαν λυγρὰ θέητρα
 τερπόμεναι δαίνυντ' ἐσθλὴν καὶ ἀμύμονα δαῖτα.
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δ' ἄλις γ' ἐτετάρφθησαν βασάνοιο (60)
 τώδε δύω κτάμεναι μεμαυῖαι νηλεῖ χαλκῷ
 μῆδεα κόψασαι ἔασαν ἅπο γ' αἰμοροῆσαι
 τοῖνδε δυοῖν κταμένοιν σκέδασαν αὖτ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλη
 οἴκαδε νοστέμεναι καὶ πρηξάμεναι γλυκὺν ὕπνον,
 δύσετο δ' ἡέλιος δνοφέρων καὶ ἔπι κνέφας ἦλθεν, (65)
 ἡμεῖς δὲ κλαίοντες ἐμείναμεν ἥοα δῖαν.
 Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἥως
[ξείνιακῇ· μείζων τῆς ἡμετέρης ἐφάνεσκεν]
 τῆμος λεσβιακαὶ θήλυες ἀγορήνδε νέοντο
 τέρψιν ζητοῦσαι ἰδὲ καὶ βασανίσματα φωτῶν. (70)

⁷³ Weise (2024:276) notes that the motif μῆδεα φωτός is borrowed from *Odyssey* 6.129, when Odysseus covers his genitalia with leaves before encountering Nausicaa.

⁷⁴ = ὄρθρος.

And so the lesbian women came out from here and there to the city's forum to find out what was happening. And then inextinguishable laughter stirred up amongst the lesbian women when they saw that there were glorious men shut up in chains in their forum; it seemed like the greatest cause for joy to them at the time. Men are detestable to them, as well as all male beasts: these women are very resentful of male genitalia. On the spot, after quickly taking the two men out of the cage, they stripped them of their clothes and fatally tortured them for a long time. From dawn to sunset, the two men gave piercing groans. But the lesbian women, sitting down on all sides spectated the baneful theatre and joyfully dined on a fine and noble feast. But when they had enough enjoyment from their torment, eagerly desiring to slaughter the two men with pitiless bronze, they chopped off their genitals and let the blood gush out. And after they slaughtered the two men, they scattered here and there to return home and enjoy a sweet sleep. The sun sank and dusk came gloomily, and we waited for the divine dawn as we wept. When Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [an alien one, since it seemed larger than ours], then the lesbian women came back to the forum, seeking joy and the torture of men.

Φοίταον ἡερίαι τε κακὰ φρεσὶ βυσοδομεῦσαι⁷⁵
 μυρία· ἡμῖν δ' αὖτε κατεκλίσθη φίλον ἦτορ.
 Τῇσιν ἡγεμόνευσε γυνὴ βασίλεια ἀμύμων
 καλὴ καὶ μεγάλη χρυσῷ ἦν ἀμφιένυσσα
 πέπλω· χρύσειον καὶ σκῆπτρον χερσὶν ἔχουσα (75)
 ἦ μὲν ἀφικομένη κάτ' ἄρ' ἔζετο ποικιλοήλω
 ἐν θρόνῳ· ἀμφίπολοι μὲν ἔχευον αἶθοπα οἶνον⁷⁶.
 Σκῆπτρῳ σημαίνησε· γυναῖκες χαλκοκορυσταὶ
 ἄνδρε δῶο κρίνασαι ἔλον καὶ ἐξέλκοντο
 εἰργμόθεν· αὐτίκα τῶδ' ἦρξεν πέρι γυμνωθῆναι. (80)
 Ἥμεῖς μὲν κλαίοντες ἐπεύχεσθαι μεμάαμεν
 εἴ κέν τις ζώῃ θεὸς εἰν κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν⁷⁷
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μυρομένοισιν.
 Ἐξαντίς περ ἔφηνεν ἀνελπις ἦ καὶ ἄμαντις.
 Γρηῦς τις δ' ὄρθωσε δέμας καὶ ὀξὺ βόωσεν. (85)
 Αὐτίκα λεσβιακαὶ δ' ἔστησαν εἰν ἀγορήφι
 τάρφες· φάσγανα πολλὰ δ' ἐνὶ παλάμῃφι σέουσai
 καὶ ἄλλας ἰαχῇ ἀναΐξαν⁷⁸ κῆρα φέρονται
 τῇσιν ἀνόπλοισιν· ταὶ νήπια οὐκ ἐνόησαν
 ὥς σφίσιν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον ἔντευξαν αὐταὶ ἐταῖραι. (90)
 Σμερδαλέῃ ὑλακῇ φεῦγον τάχα ἄλλυδις ἄλλη
 κοῦραι ἄνοπλόμεναι· ταὶ μὲν λυγροῖς ξιφέεσσιν
 ὦκα διωκόμεναι ἐνάριζον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 νηλέα τύπτουσai· πάντῃ ῥέε αἷμα κελαινόν.

⁷⁵ cf. 1.144.

⁷⁶ Αἶθοπα οἶνον is used in this *sedes* 11 times in the *Iliad*, 10 times in the *Odyssey*, and twice in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

⁷⁷ Protasis of a 'vivid future' conditional (εἰ + ἄν + subj., 'if **by chance**...'), we'd expect the apodosis to be in the future or aorist tense, but we are surprised with an imperfect indicative, a 'past general' conditional ('**but no solution would**...').

⁷⁸ = ἀναΐσσω.

They came here in the early morning while planning countless evil things in the depths of their souls, and once again our dear hearts shattered. A noble queen ruled them, she was fair and tall, clothed in a golden robe, and held a golden sceptre in her hands. After she came down, she then sat herself on an ornate throne, as her handmaids poured fiery wine for her. She gave a signal with her sceptre and the bronze-armoured women chose two men to be judged, dragged them out from their cage, and immediately started stripping them naked. Weeping, we tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, but no solution would reveal itself to us as we shed our tears. And she appeared once again, un hoped for and unexpectedly. The old woman somehow straightened up her body and shouted with a piercing voice. A dense crowd of lesbian women immediately stood up in the forum. Shaking many swords in their hands they rushed at the other women with a shout and brought death to those who were unarmed. The foolish girls didn't realise that their own companions were bringing utter destruction down upon them. The unarmed girls quickly fled this way and that way with a terrible howl. And while causing them to quickly flee they slew them here and there, beating them mercilessly with their deadly swords, and dark blood gushed everywhere.

- Δεσποίνην αὐτὴν κούρη μεγάλη ἐπίβησεν (95)
 ξανθοκόμη· ἥ μιν σκῆπτρῳ θρασὺ ἀντιτύπευεν
 αὐτὰρ οὐτις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μαρναμένη περ.
 Τὴν δ' ἀναΐξαμένη χαμάδις βάλε καὶ ξίφος ὅζυ
 θῆκεν πρὸς δειλὴν· τόδ' ἔπος ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνομάζε·
[οὐκ ἄρ' ἐγὼ κατέχοιμι μόνος· μοὶ γὰρ ἐβοηθεῖ (100)
Φράντα μεταθήτωρ· ὅδε μοι μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα]
 «Τέθναθι δεινὰ μεγαῖρα ἐπεὶ κτάνες ἄνδρας ἀρίστους
 χωρὶς αἰτίης τε μόνως ὥς ἄνδρες ἔασιν
 καρτεροὶ ὑψότεροί τε δ' ἔχοντες μήδεα φωτός.
 Ταῦτα μεγαίρομένη κατέπεφνες φῶτας ἀρίστους. (105)
 Νῦν μὲν ἐγὼ κτενέω· πρὶν δ' αὖ δέ σε ἐξαναρίσαι⁷⁹
 δείξω σευ ἴσῃν ἔμεναι ἄλλῃσι γυναιξὶν
 αἵτινες ἀνδράσι πᾶσιν ἐδούλευσαν⁸⁰ κατὰ κόσμον.»
 Ἦ ῥα καὶ ἐξ ἐσθῆτος ἐξαῦτις φαλλὸν ἔρυσσεν
 μακρὸν καὶ πυκνόν· τὸν θαυμάζων ἐόρακα (110)
 οὔνεκ' ἐϋπλοκαμὶς σπῆσεν στωλήφι κόραυν⁸¹.
 Αὐτίκα τῇ κοράμῃ πέπλον χρύσειον ἄειρεν
 καὶ μιν ἔμβαίνουσα πύλας εἴσηλθεν ἔρωτος
 ἥρξε δὲ μοιχέμεναι· ἄλλαι κοῦραι δέ τ' ἔποντο
 ξιφοφόροι· πᾶσαι μὲν ἔφαινεν μήδεα φωτῶν (115)
 τάσδε νικηθείσας περ ἐμοιχίσαντο βίηφι.

⁷⁹ Obscure meaning.

⁸⁰ ASP has ἐδάπευσαν.

⁸¹ cf. LSJ s.v. κόρουνα, 'barbarism for κόρη, Ar. Av. 1678'.

The ruler herself was attacked by a tall blonde-haired girl, and she boldly struck her with her sceptre, but no solution made itself known to her as she fought. After darting up, she threw her to the ground, put her sharp sword to the poor girl, and said the following words [I myself wouldn't have understood it if my translator Franta hadn't helped by translating this language for me].

“Die, you terrible witch! Since you've killed the noblest men for no reason, except only because they're men: stronger, taller, and in possession of male genitalia. You've killed the noblest men because you envy these things! Now I will kill you – but not before I prove to you that you are the same as any other woman who are slaves to all men throughout the universe.”

So she spoke, and suddenly she took out a phallus from under her dress, long and dense; I was amazed when I saw it, because the maiden drew it out from her well-woven dress. Immediately she lifted up the queen's golden cloth, and having 'boarded' her, she entered the gates of eros, and began to have sex with her. And the other girls followed suit, swords in hand. All the girls revealed their male genitalia, and forcibly adulterated these conquered women.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τέλεσαν ἀεκούσῃσ' ἔργα ἐρώτων
 τὰς κούρας κατέπεφνον ἀπάσας νηλεῖ χαλκῷ
 πάσας ἐξείης· στυγερὸν τόδε πρῆγμα ἴδεσθαι.
 Ἄλλ' ὅτε νῦν τέλεσαν πάντως τὰ δ' ἀνείκεα ἔργα (120)
 πρὸς δ' εἰργμόν τινες ἐρχόμεναι θυρίον ῥ' ἀνέφξαν⁸²
 τῷ δ' ἐξηλθον ἐγὼ καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
 εὐχάριτες κούρησιν ἐπευχόμεθ' ἀνδρομέοισιν
 τῷδε δὺν ἐτάρῳ συνίστασθην παρ' ἐμεῖο.
 Ἄλλη δ' ἄμμε κόραυνα ποτὶ θρόνον ἦκε φαεινὸν (125)
 τῷ μὲν ἐφεζομένη γρη῏ς ἦν πότνα ἴδεσθαι
 ἢ πρὶν ἀναῖξας' ἀρχὴν πόρεν αἵματοχεύης.
 Ἦδε καθιζομένη σκῆπτρου δ' ἔσχεν παλάμηφι
 ὥς δέσποινα νέη· κῦδος δέ ἐ κρὰς κεκάλυπεν.
 ἄμμε δ' ἀφικομένους εἶδεν καὶ εἶρετο δ' ἡμᾶς (130)
 γλώσση ἄλλοδαπῇ τῆς οὔτις γνώματ' ἔειχεν⁸³
 αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρηζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα·
 «ὦ ξεῖνοί τινές ἐστε; πόθεν γλαφυρὸν πλέτε κόσμον;
 ἦ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἦ μασιδίως ἀλάλησθε
 οἷά τε ληῖστίηρες ἐπ' ἀστέρας ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα (135)
 ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὸν ἄλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες;»

⁸² = ἀνοίγνυμι.

⁸³ = εἶχεν.

But when they were done exerting the works of eros on those who didn't consent to them, they killed all the girls one after another with pitiless bronze: it was a horrible thing to behold. But when they had completely finished doing those shameful deeds, some of the women went to the cage and opened the little doors, which my trusty companions and I exited through. We thanked the manly maidens greatly, and two of my companions stood together next to me. But another maiden brought us to the splendid throne, on which the old woman was sitting (regal to behold), who had previously leapt up and started the bloodshed. She held her sceptre in her hands as she sat on it, like a new queen, and glory covered her head. And when she'd seen us after we had arrived, she questioned us in an alien language which none of us knew, but our translator Franta translated her words.

“So, aliens, who are you? Where have you sailed through the hollow cosmos from? Are you wandering in pursuit of some goal or just in vain? Are you wandering through the stars here and there in pursuit of some goal or just recklessly like pirates⁸⁴, staking your souls by bringing misfortune to strangers?”

⁸⁴ Space-pirates are a relatively common sci-fi trope, the most notable example would be Han Solo from George Lucas' *Star Wars* film franchise. Space-pirates were also featured in the first novelised instalment of Douglas Adam's *Hitchhiker's guide to the Galaxy* (ch. 29).

- Ἦ φάτο· τὴν μὲν ἐγὼ περ ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπον
 ἡμετέρῃ γλώσσῃ· τὸ μεταφρήζων μετέθηκεν.
 «Οὐ γάρ τοι δέσποινα κακὰ φρονέοντες ἔβημεν
 τειδὸν πλανήτην· ληστήρες οὐχί τοι ἔσμεν (140)
 ἀλλὰ φυλακτῆρες πόλεος τηλοῦ ἀπονόσφιν
 πλάνην ναιόμενοι τὸν Γαίην κικλήσκουσιν
 ἄλλοδαπὸν ξεῖνον· τηλοῦθεν κοσμοοδεύων
 εἰλήλουθα πόλιν καὶ ἄστερα σιγαλοέντα
 σῆς ἀρχῆς σὺν νηϊ τ' ἐμῇ καὶ ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν (145)
 ἄνερα ζητοῦντες χαλεπὸν φυζάνορα φῶρα·
 ἄρχοντες πέμψαν καὶ μοι κρατερῶς ἐπίτελλον
 μή ποτε νοστήσαι πρὶν κλέπτῃν φῶτα λάβεσθαι.
 Αὐτὰρ ἀφικομένους εἰς τοῦτον τὸν πλανήτην
 ἄρπαξαν κοῦραι χαλεπαὶ λέσβαι τε γυναῖκες (150)
 ἀφράκτους ἄμμ' ἄνδρας ἀνόπλους ληϊσάαντο
 ἄμμι δὲ καὶ πίσυρας⁸⁵ φῶτας κακότητι κάτεκταν·
 πρῶτον ἄνδρε δύσω τώδ' εἰς πτολίεθρον ἔπεμψα
 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δύο μετὰ πάντας ἄνερας ἄλλους
 τῷ μὲν οὐ κτείναν γ' ἐξαῦτις ὥς ἐπέοικε (155)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τὸ βασάνισαν ἐς ἥελιον καταδύντα
 τερπόμεναι· πυμάτως ἀπόκοψαν μῆδεα φωτῶν
 ἡμᾶς λεφθέντας εἰργμόνδε λυγρόνδε βάλλοντο
 τῷ μὲν ἐνίσχεσθαι σφάγιον δέ τε ποιήσεσθαι.

⁸⁵ = τέσσαρες.

*So she spoke, and I replied to her in my own language,
with our translator translating it for her.*

“No, my lady, we have not come to your planet with evil intent. We aren’t pirates, but rather the guardians of a city far, far away,⁸⁶ we live on a planet called Gaia, alien and strange. we have come on a journey from far away to your city and glistening star of your empire, with my ship and trusty companions, seeking a dangerous man, a thief in flight. Our rulers sent us on our way and gave me strict commands never to return home until the thief is caught. But when we arrived on this planet, we were taken captive by violent maidens and lesbian women. They carried us away when we were off guard and unarmed, then they killed four of my men in a wicked manner. First, the two men that I had sent to the city, and then another two from amongst many of the other men, but they didn’t kill them outright, as was the proper thing to do, but rejoiced in torturing them up until sunset. Finally, they chopped off their male genitalia, and threw the ones of us that survived in a miserable cage to keep us stuck in there and to make us their sacrifice.

⁸⁶ ‘Far, far away’ (τηλοῦ ἀπονόσφιν) is clearly an allusion to the opening crawls of George Lucas’ *Star Wars* film franchise (‘A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...’).

- Οὕτως ἄμμε ταχῶς δ' εἴλοιεν αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος (160)
 εἴ μὴ λεσβιακαὶ κοῦραι ὀλολυμέναι εἶην
 σῆσιν μαρναμένης ἔρμαφροδίτῃσι γυναιξίν.
 Τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ χάριν οἶδα τεῖν κούρησί τε πᾶσι.»
 Ὡς ἐράμην· ὁ μεταθήτωρ μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.
 Ἡ δ' ἀπαμειβομένη προσεφώνεε πότνια γηῦς· (165)
 [γλώσση ἀλλοδαπῇ ὁ μεταφῆζων μετέθηκε].
 «Οὐ γὰρ μὲν τοι ξεῖνε κόραυναι ἔρμαφρόδιται
 ἀλλὰ νέοι φῶτές γε γυναικείοις ἀραρώτες
 πάντα δέ τοι ἐρέω εἰ πυνθάνεσθαι ἔοικεν
 νίκην ἡμετέρην τέχνην δολοέντα τε ἔργα· (170)
 ἀλλὰ γε τῶν πάντων ἔργων πεπνυμένοι ἐσμέν.
 Ἀλλ' ἴθι νῦν εἰς νῆα θοὴν σὺν σοῖς ἐτάροισιν
 τῇδ' ἀναπαυσέμεναι ἰδὲ καὶ σίτοιο πάσασθαι
 σῶμά γε κλυζέμεναι καὶ πρηζέμεναι γλυκὺν ὕπνον.
 Δαίσομεν ἐσπέριοι ἀγορήφι ἀμύμονα δαῖτα (175)
 νίκη τερπόμενοι καὶ ἐλευθερίῃ μεγαθύμῳ
 τῇδὲ σε προσκαλέω μέτεχειν ἰδὲ καὶ ἐτάρους τε.
 Ἡμῶν δαινυμένων ἐρέω εἴ κεν περ ἄκουοις.»
 ὥς μὲν ἀμειβομένῳ ἔπεσιν διαλέξαμεν⁸⁷ ἄμφω.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μὲν ἔβην εὐεργεῖην ποτὶ νῆα (180)
 τῇδ' ἀναπαυσέμεναι ἰδὲ καὶ σίτοιο πάσασθαι
 σῶμά τε κλυζέμεναι καὶ πρηζάμεναι γλυκὺν ὕπνον
 αὐτὸς ἔγωγε· ἔποντο φίλοι ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι.

⁸⁷ In Attic Greek, διαλέγομαι is a euphemism for having sex (cf. LSJ s.v. διαλέγω B.5.), so this usage could also be an innuendo.

Utter destruction would have quickly taken us in this manner, if the lesbian maidens had not been destroyed by your battling women, the hermaphrodites. Which I thanked all the maidens for.”

So I spoke, and my translator translated my words. And the queenly old woman said this in reply [in her alien language, which my translator translated].

“For your information, alien, the maidens aren’t hermaphrodites, but are rather young men fitted with womanly items. I’ll tell you everything, if you’d care to listen, about our victory, cunning, and crafty deeds. We are certainly experts in all sorts of things. But go now back to your nimble ship along with your comrades, so you can regain your strength and have some food, as well as bathe your body and enjoy a sweet sleep. We will hold an excellent banquet in the forum this evening, taking delight in our victory and high-spirited freedom. I am inviting you, as well your companions, to take part in this. I’ll tell you about it after we’ve feasted, if you’ll listen!” So the both of us conversed, answering each other with a speech. But I went back to the well-wrought ship to regain my strength as well as have some food, and also bathe my body and enjoy a sweet sleep – I myself, and my dear trusty companions followed.

- Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατέδυσ' ἱερὸν φάος ἠέλιοιο
[ζεῖνον καὶ ἄτοπον· μάλα γὰρ μέγας ἠέλιος ἦν] (185)
 ἡμεῖς ἐκ νηὸς ἤμεν δ' ἀγορήνδε δάσεσθαι
 Οἶδ' ἄπο τῶν νεκρῶν ἦνεγκαν σώματα πάντα
 ἐκ ἀγορῆς ἄλυδις λοῦσαν δέ τε αἶμα κελαινόν.
 Πάσῃ δ' εἰν ἀγορῇ κλισίαι ἦσαν τε τράπεζαι
 παννύχιοι πολέες δαινύατο δαῖτα περίσσην (190)
 κοῦραι καὶ φῶτες θῆλυν κρύψιν δ' ἀπόδοντες.
 Τοῖσιν μὲν λύχνοι ἠλεκτρικοὶ ἦσαν ἄριστοι
 ὀξέα λαμπόμενοι· ἀτὰρ οὐρανόθεν διέλαμψαν
 ἀστέρες πάμπολλοι ἰδὲ καὶ πίσυρές τε σελῆναι
 ἐσθλαὶ καὶ μεγάλαι μέγα μείζονες τῇ χθονίῃ περ, (195)
 φάος ἔην ἀγορῇ σχέδον ἥματι λαμπετοῶντι.
 Ἥμεῖς δ' ἐζόμενοι δάσαμεν κρέα καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τραπέζην εἶχον σὺν γρηῦν γυναικὶ
 δεσποίνῃ· ἥ μοι κατέλεξεν πρήγματα πάντα
 ἀλλὰ δὲ παντομεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα. (200)
*«Ὡ ζεῖν' εἰρώτῃς με τὰ πρήγματα καὶ περὶ τούτων
 λεσβιακῶν κταμένων καὶ πῶς τάδε πάντα τέτυκτο.
 Τοί γαρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω· μάλα γὰρ μακρὸν ἔπος ἔσται
 ποῦ δ' ἀρχήν γε λάβοιμι τίδε πρότερον καταλέξω;
 Σύμπλεκτον τόδε πρήγμα κακὸν δέ τε μυθήσασθαι. (205)
 Πρῶτον μὲν τοι ζεῖνε μέθεν τὰ θέμεθλα ἐνίψω»⁸⁸*

⁸⁸ This speech is rather long and ends at line 333, it also contains a direct quote of some propaganda (223-230) which I won't italicise to make it easier to spot.

But when the sun's holy light set [alien and unusual, since it was a very large sun], we left the ship and went to the forum to dine. They had taken out all the bodies of the dead from the forum somewhere else and washed away the dark blood. And there were couches and tables throughout the whole forum, the city held a remarkable feast all night long; girls and men who'd put away their feminine disguise. There were excellent electric lamps in that place, shining with a sharp glow, but also shining down from heaven were numerous stars as well as four moons which were fine and large, much larger than the Earth's. It was almost as light in the forum as during the shining day. We dined on meat and sweet wine as we reclined. But I held the table along with the old female ruler, and she told me everything about the matter, but my universal translator still translated the words.

"O alien, you ask me about affairs that even concern the slain lesbian women and how it all happened. Well, I'll tell you, but it's a very long story. Where should I begin and what should I recount first? This is a complicated issue, and difficult to explain. Firstly, for your information, alien, I shall tell you the basics about myself:

Τεθίς⁸⁹ μοι ὄνομ' ἐστὶ τεθὶν δέ με κικλήσκουσιν
 πάντες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἐμαὶ ἐρήρες ἐταῖραι.
 Εἰμὶ δὲ βιολόγος καὶ τῶν γενεῶν μηχανίστα
 οὐ γὰρ εἶν ταύτω γέγαα πλάνη ὀλοέντι. (210)

τῆδε γ' ἐγὼ κατέβην καὶ αὐτὴ νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 αὐτὴ πεμψαμένη περ ἅπ' ἀνδρῶν κάρτος ἐχόντων
 πάσας λεσβιακὰς τέχνη κτάμεναι μεμανῦα.
 Αἶ' μὲν ἐκ τούτου πλανήτου τῷ περ ἔναιον
 ἦε τέ μιν Λέσβον κεκαλήκασιν οὐνόμαζόν τε (215)

ἐσκέδασαν προπαγάνδαν ἐν ἄλλοις πλανήτησιν
 ἡμέτεροις οἱ δ' ἄμμι περιστροφέοντες ἔασιν
 ἡέλιον· κρατερόν περ ἔχεσκον ραδιόφωνον
 μείζονα τ' ἰσχυρόν βαρυτώτερον οὐκ ὀλίγον περ
 ἦ τοῖς οἱ ἕτεροί περ ἐφώνεον ἀλλήλοισιν. (220)

Τούτῳ μὲν σκέδασαν κάτ' ἀνεικελίην⁹⁰ προπαγάνδαν
 ἄνδρας κακτάμεναι θήλυες δέ τε ἡγεμονεῦσαι.
 «Ὅροθε⁹¹ ταχῶς κοῦραι καὶ ἐϋπλόκαμοί τε γυναῖκες
 ἄνδρας κακτάμεναι καὶ ἐλευθερίην ὑμ' ὀπάσσαι
 Οὐδ' ἄρα περ δέομεν φωτῶν λασίων κακοοδμῶν (225)

μὴ τέκνων ἔνεκεν μὴ τέρψεος ἀλλὰ τὰ πάντα
 μονογενεῖς περ ἀρηρέμεναι δυνάμεσθα καὶ αὐταὶ
 Ὑμμιδ' ἅπαντα δὲ ταῦτα δεδύγμενα⁹² ἔσται ἅπ' ἡμῶν
 ἥμος κακτάμενοι θῆρες ἄρρῆνες ἔσονται
 ὑμετέρῳ πλάνῃ· ἄλλα' ὄροθε ταχῶς τε μάχεσθε.» (230)

⁸⁹ A name possibly modelled on Τηθύς, the name of Oceanus' wife, and an archetypally old woman.

⁹⁰ = ἀεικής.

⁹¹ This form of ὀρθόω is odd, since it's supposed to be the 2nd sg. pres. imperat. (ὀρθου). The singular imperative is very intimate.

⁹² Would make more sense as δεδειγμένα (perf. mp. part. n. pl. acc. of δείκνυμι).

Tethis is my name, and I am called Tethis by all people, as well as by my trusty companions. I'm a biologist and a genetic engineer, for I was not born on this deadly planet. I also landed on this planet by myself with my black ship, after being sent here by men who hold power, with the intention of killing every lesbian through my art. These women are from this planet on which they reside, they've called it 'Lesbos' and have spread propaganda across the other planets that are orbiting our sun. It had a radiophone that was stronger, bigger, more powerful, weightier, and certainly not weaker than the other ones that are used to communicate with each other. They used this to spread their misguiding propaganda that men should be killed and that women should rule:

"Rise up quickly you maidens and fair-tressed women, to kill men and give yourselves freedom! We don't need hairy and foul-smelling men for the sake of having children or for our own pleasure, but we can arrange it all by ourselves as a single gender. And you shall have all these things from us that I have shown you, so long as these male beasts on your planet are killed. Now rise up and start fighting quick!"

Ὡς αἶ μὲν γ' ἐπέεσσιν ἀποσταδὰ λυγρολόγοισιν
 ἐσκέδασαν προπαγάνδαν ἀνήνορι ραδιοφώνῳ.
 Τοὺς μὲν ἀκούσαντας μῆνις⁹³ ἔλε ἡὲ φόβος τε·
 καίπερ ἐνὶ πλάνησι κόραι καὶ θήλυες ἄλλαι
 λοιποῖσιν πλείσται στύγεον ἔπεα προπαγάνδης (235)
 λεσβιακῶν καὶ τῆσιν ἔμεν δοκέοντο γελαστὰ
 ἦσαν δ' ἄρχοντές ρα γυναῖκας ἀνδρεῖφόντας⁹⁴
 ἄλλας νικῆσαι ὀλιγωτέρας περ ἐούσας
 τῶν νομίμων θήλων, κτάμεναι δὲ τε φῶτας ἅπαντας
 Λέσβῳ πλανήτη· φοβέοντο δὲ μὴ τὸ γένοιτο (240)
 ἄλλοις πλανήτης τό σφιν κῆρ εἴσατο εἶναι.
 Τοῦνεκα μὲν πέμψαν εἰς πλάνην λεσβογυναικῶν
 λάθρα περ οὐ φανερώς ὥς τῆσιν κῆρα φέροιμι.
 Οὐδὲ τόδ' ἐκτελέσαι δυνάμην μικροῦ χρόνοιον
 ἀλλὰ τὸ τευξέμεναι εἶλεν πολλοὺς ἐνιαυτοὺς (245)
 εἴκοσιν ἢ καὶ πέντε ἕως ἄνδρες γεγάσσι
 ἡὲ πεφύκασιν καταπέφνεμεν ὥς ἐθέλησα.
 Τοὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω πρῆξιν τέχνην δὲ τ' ἐμείην.
 Πάντας λεσβιακαὶ Λέσβῳ φῶτας κατέπεφνον
 πλανήτη καὶ τὰς νομίμας θήλυας ἐδάμησαν⁹⁵. (250)
 Οὐ μὲν τις κούρη γ' ὁμαλὴ τόλμησεν ἐνισπεῖν⁹⁶
 πόθον γ' εὐνάων σὺν ἀνέρι τεκνοδοτῇρι
 ἀλλὰ δὲ ταὶ πᾶσαι μεμίμησαν λέσβιαι εἶναι
 δεῖσαν γ' ὅζυν ἱμάντα τε καὶ χάλυβον πολὺ πικρόν.

⁹³ This type of anger is characteristic of divine wrath, with the exception of Achilles.

⁹⁴ cf. *Iliad* 2.651, 7.166, 8.264, 17.259; cf. also Aeschylus *Seven Against Thebes* 573.

⁹⁵ = δαμάζω.

⁹⁶ = ἐνέπω.

So they spoke from afar in deadly words, spreading their propaganda with that unmanly radiophone. Anger and fear seized the men who heard it. And despite most of the other girls and women on the remaining planets hating the words of the lesbian women's propaganda, it also seemed laughable to them. But the leaders knew that the man-slaying women had conquered them, even though they were fewer in number than law-abiding women, and all the men were killed on the planet Lesbos. And they were afraid that it might come to pass that death also comes for them on the other planets. Which is why they sent me to this planet of lesbian women, secretly, not openly, so that I might bring death to them instead. But I could not have accomplished this within such a short amount of time, but the plotting itself took many years, it took twenty-five until men were born and grew up to kill whoever I wanted. Now I'll tell you about my accomplishment and skill: the lesbian women have killed all the men on the planet Lesbos and have gained mastery over the law-abiding women. The average maiden couldn't dare tell you where the desire to have sex with a child-gifting man comes from, but they all imitate being lesbians, since they fear the sharp whip and piercing steel.

- Λάθρα δέ τ' εὐνάζεσθαι ἐώθαν ἄρνεσι θηρῶν (255)
 ἄρνοις ἢ ἐ τράγοις κυσὶ καὶ δμητοῖσι λέουσι
 πάμπολλοις ζῴοις εἴ κέν περ ἄρσενες εἶην.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ καὶ φανερώς κούρησιν συνδύασοντο
 ὥστε γάμφ' τάδ' ἔοικεν ὑπ' ἀνδροφόνων γε γυναικῶν.
 Εἴ κέν τις κούρων ἔθελεν τέκνον τετοκεῦσαι (260)
 ταῦτα δὲ βιολόγοισι τέχνησιν πάντα γέγοντο
 ὦδ' ἔκ τῃς ἐτέρης ζευχούσης⁹⁷ ὥϊον ἄλλο.
 Τοῦ μὲν ἔλον κάρυν' ἔκ μόνον καὶ τῷδε ὅπασσαν
 ἐξαπίνης ὦδ' ἐκ κεκάρφθετο θαύμα ἴδεσθαι (265)
 ἀνδρὸς ἀφισταμένοιο· τὰ περ τέχνησι τέτυκτο.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐν ὑστέροφιν περ ἔθηκαν ἥτις ἔνευσεν
 σφωὶν ζευχθεισαῖν κοῦραιν βρέφος ἐνδοφόρευεν
 ἢ ἐ τόκον· τῷ γὰρ ἄνευ ἀνδρὸς τέκνα τέκοντο
 θήλυες σύμπασαι· οὐκ ὑπὶλὸν ἦν χρομόσωμα. (270)
 Τὰς μὲν θηροφίλους ἔασαν ἔχμεν διαπρηῆξιν
 λάθρα περ ἐργάζεμεν ὥς μὲν σφας θυμὸς ἄνωγεν⁹⁸.
 Τρηχὺ δὲ καὶ χαλεπὸν περ ἔεσκεν θηροφυλάσσειν
 καὶ κεκμηκυῖαι ἔασαν θήρεσσι μιγῆναι.
 Τῷδε τέ μοι λύσις αὖ πάντων ἔφανε φρονέουσι· (275)

⁹⁷ = ζεύγνυμι.

⁹⁸ cf. *Iliad* 6.444, 7.74, 8.189, 8.322, 9.101, 9.703, 14.195, 15.43, 18.90, 18.176, 18.426, 19.102, 20.77, 20.179, 22.142, 24.198; *Odyssey* 1.316, 5.89, 8.70, 11.206, 14.246, 15.395, 16.141, 16.466, 18.409, 21.194.

They were accustomed to sleep with male beasts in secret, with lambs and billy goats, with dogs and tamed lions, with all kinds of animals, but only if they were male. But they were openly forming couples with maidens as well, as if they were married, since this was accepted by these man-slaying women. And if any of the girls wanted to have a child, it was all facilitated by biological technologies. They took an egg from the innermost part of the woman and another egg from the other partner. They took a single seed from one, and fused it to the other one. The egg is instantaneously fertilized (a wonder to behold) without the presence of a man: this was facilitated by technology. Next, they placed it in the womb of one of the two married girls who consented to carry the foetus inside her and give birth to it. So children are born without a man's involvement in this way by no one but women, since there was no Y chromosome. They allowed the beast-lovers to keep their accomplishments in check by performing them in secret as their hearts bid them. It was rough and very difficult to guard the animals so because they were worn out they let them have sex with the beasts. At this, the solution for it all entered my mind once again.

Πρῶτα δὲ σὺν νομίμησί τε καὶ ὁμαλῆσι γυναιξὶ
 πολλὰ δ' ὁμιλομένη γε φιλοφροσύνην ῥα τέτευχα
 λάθρα μὲν οὐ φανερώς ὥς λεσβιακὰς ἐφόβουμεν
 ἡμους περ κοῦραι νόμιμαι καὶ ἐμοὶ πεπίθοντο
 τῆμος ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θεμένη ἐτάρας προσέειπον (280)

πάμπολα γνωρίσασά τε σχήματ' ἀποκρύψασα
 τῆς στάσεος· πᾶσαι νεῦσαν καὶ ὄρκον ὁμοῖσαν
 ὥς μοι μαρναμένη ἔπεσιν καὶ χερσὶν ἀλέξειν
 τῆσι δέ τ' ὀρκοφόρησι τὰ πρήγματα νῦν ἐπίτελλον
 καὶ γὰρ λεσβιακῆσι ἐτεύχομεν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον. (285)

Ἔσκε δὲ μητροπόλιθι δόμος καλῶς ἀραρώς περ
 ὄν καὶ μουσαῖον μὲν ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν
 τοῦτ' αὖ μουσαίῳ νεκροὶ τινες ἄνδρες ἔχοντο—
 κρυσταλλόπηκτοι⁹⁹ εἰ μὴ σαπροὶ γε γένοιεν—
 ὥστε γένος σβέστον πρότ' ἔον καὶ θαῦμα ἰδεσθαι. (290)

Μία δὲ τῶν νομίμων κούρων τότε δῶμα φύλασσε
 μουσαῖον· τύχῃ δέ τ' εἰσάτο εὐ ἀραρυῖα.
 Νυκτὸς γὰρ ἦλθον εἰς δῶματα· ἥ μοι ἀνοιγνύ
 κούρη δωμοφύλαξ [κουστῶδα δέ μιν καλέουσιν
 ῥωμαϊκῶ μύθῳ γῆ ὑμετέρῃ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες]. (295)

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐλήν περ' ἀφικόμεθ' ἄνδρας ἐχούσῃν
 (κρυσταλλοπήκτους εἰ μὴ σαπροὶ γε γένοιεν)

⁹⁹ Ancient men preserved by being frozen into an imperishable state lends itself very well to meta-literary analysis, since this displays an act of preserving the past like how late antique writers often explored the same concept by comparing people to statues; cf. *Astr.* 5.203; New vs. Old.

Firstly, I made friends by often associating myself with law-abiding and ordinary women, in secret, not openly, because we were afraid of the lesbian women. And when the law-abiding girls also trusted me, then I summoned my companions after establishing a forum. I explained everything to them and revealed my plans for the revolution. Everyone nodded in approval and swore an oath that they would lend me aid in my battle through their words and actions. I now gave instructions to those who'd sworn the oath, and so we prepared utter destruction for the lesbian women. But there was a beautifully furnished home in the metropolis which was also called a museum. Some dead men were kept in this museum – cryogenically frozen¹⁰⁰ so that they wouldn't rot – since they were an extinct race from the past, and a wonder to behold. But one of the law-abiding maidens guards this museum, and the chance seemed well-prepared. For I entered the house in the course of the night, and the girl who guarded the home [what your Earth's wise men call a 'custodian', from the Latin word]¹⁰¹ opened it for me. Then when we came to the hall that had the men (cryogenically frozen so that they wouldn't rot),

¹⁰⁰ Lit. 'stuck/frozen in ice'.

¹⁰¹ i.e., *custos*, *-odis*.

τοῦνεκά μοι κούρη φυλάκεσσά γε κίσταν ἄνοιγνυ
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κόψιν¹⁰² κάψης¹⁰³ σπήσασα ὀξείαν
 τοῖσι δὲ νεκροῖσιν φωτῶν ὄρχεις ἐτόμησα (300)
 ἐν κάψῃ κρύψασα δ' ἔβην ἵμεν· δωμοφύλαξ τε
 πάντα κεκόσμηκεν ὥς τὸ πρὶν ἢ ἐκάτοιγνυ.

Ὑστερον αὖτε κύνας δ' ἀγανοὺς κρίσασα συνηθεῖς
 μικροὺς οὐ μεγάλους περ ἐπεὶ κρυφθῆναι ὄφειλον
 ῥηϊδίως, μέτα τοῖς ὄρχεις φωτῶν ἐφύτευσα (305)
 τέχνησιν πυκινῇσι κακὸν τοι ἔργον ἔεσκεν.

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα κυσὶν ὄρχεις ἀνδρῶν ἐφύτευσα
 εὐτυχέως καὶ τοῖδε τομῆς πικρῆς ἰάσαντο
 τοὺς μὲν ἐγὼν ἦγον μετὰ κούρησιν νομίμῃσιν
 ταύτας δ' ἐμβαίνειν ἰδὲ καὶ φιλότῃ μιγῆναι. (310)

Ὅρχεις ἀνδρομέας περ ἔχον καὶ σπέρματα φωτῶν
 κακταμένων· τότε τοὶ τίκτον νεκροὶ περ ἐόντες
 Ἐξαπίνης πολλὰ κοῦραι εἶν γαστρὶ ἔχοντο¹⁰⁴
 ἡμισέαι οὐ πᾶσαι ἐπεὶ φαίνειν ἐπέοικεν
 ὥς τοι ἡμισέαι ἐ φέρον¹⁰⁵ ἀλλ' ἡμισέαι δέ (315)
 δῶκάν σφιν κάρυον ὥς ἦθος λεσβιακῆσιν.

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα τόκον τετοκῆκασι νεκροτοκεύτῃν
 ἡμισέαι θήλειαι ἔσαν καὶ ἡμισέες τε
 παῖδες ἀνδρεῖοι· τόδε μοι ἐτέταρπε φίλον κῆρ
 τοὺς μὲν κρυπταδίως δὲ πεπαιδεύκασι κόραυναι (320)
 καὶ ὥς θηλείας μεμίμωσαν γ' ἤματα πάντα
 ἀλλ' ὥς θρεψάμενοι οὐκ ἀνδρέα ἔργα δέοντο
 ὥς ὅτε λεσβιακαὶ γε κορίσκας γυμνάζοντο
 πᾶσιν ἀέθλοισιν μέμαθον καὶ ἀρήϊα ἔργα.

¹⁰² = κοπίς.

¹⁰³ Obscure, the Czech suggests 'pocket'.

¹⁰⁴ cf. LSJ s.v. ἔχω A.II.4.

¹⁰⁵ Another idiom for a pregnant woman, cf. LSJ s.v. φέρω A.I.

which is why the girl on guard opened the chest for me, but I, having drawn my sharp cleaver from my pocket, cut the male testicles from the dead men and went to leave after hiding them in my pocket. The custodian kept everything in order as before, and closed up. Later, after picking out gentle and tame dogs, the small ones, not the large ones, since they needed to be hidden at a moment's notice, I implanted the male testicles among them through my complex procedures. It was hard work, let me tell you. But when I had successfully implanted the men's testicles in the dogs and they'd healed from the painful surgery, I led them to the law-abiding maidens so they could 'board' them and mingle in love. They had men's testicles and the semen of slain men, so they had generative power despite being dead. Many maidens immediately became fully pregnant, half of them, not all, since it seemed right for it to appear that half of them carried themselves in pregnancy whilst the other half gave them the seed, as was customary for lesbian women. But when they produced offspring that were born from dead parents, half of them were girls and the other half were male children. This made my dear heart glad, since the maidens raised them up in secret, and made them imitate being women every day. But no masculine things were missing when they were being brought up, since the lesbian women trained the infant girls for all kinds of hardships and learnt about martial matters.

- Ἦμος δ' ἤβωσαν παμπληθεῖς καὶ ἐγένοντο (325)
 τόσσοι κρυπτάνδρες πόσσαι δέ τε ἀνδροφονεῖαι
 λεσβιακαὶ τε νέαι στρατιῶται καὶ φυλάκεσσαι
 τῆμος μὲν στασιαζόμενοι κτάμεν ἀνδροφονεΐας
 πάσας αἶδε θέλον φυσεας κόσμου στροφίζεσθαι
 Νῦν μὲν ἐλεύθεροί ἐσμεν ἐνὶ ταύτῃ δέ τε χώρα (330)
 ἄνδρες καὶ θήλυες ὥς ἀμφοτέροις ἐπέοικεν.
 Ἀλλὰ σὺ χαῖρ' ὧ ζεῖνε ἐπεὶ φύγες αἰπὸν ὄλεθρον
 αὐτὸς καὶ ἔταροι, ἡμεῖς κεχαρήκαμεν αὐτοί.»
 Οὕτως παννύχιοι δάσαμεν μὲν ἀμύμονα δαῖτα
 πάντες ἐζόμενοι κρέα δ' ἄσπετα καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ. (335)
 Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἥως
 [ζεινιακὴ· μείζων τῆς ἡμέτερης ἐφάνεσκεν]
 νῆα μὲν εὐξέστην ἐπιβήσαμεν ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτοιο φίλους ὀλέσαντες ἐταίρους.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος δ' ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα (340)
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον πλάνην ξεῖνον λελιπόντες
 Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ This book seems modelled on the Lemnian episode of Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, but the motif of men entering women-only spaces is commonly found throughout Classical literature, the closest parallel I can think of is Statius' *Achilleid*, when Achilles is disguised as a girl amongst the maidens of Skyros.

But when the whole lot of them grew out of puberty and there were as many hidden men as there were men-slaying women, young lesbian soldiers and guards, then in revolution we killed all the men-slayers who wanted to turn the nature of the cosmos upside down. We are free in this land now, both men and women, as is proper for both. But you, O alien, be glad since you and your comrades have escaped utter destruction, we are glad ourselves!"

So she spoke, and we feasted all night on an excellent banquet, everyone sitting down, with endless amounts of meats and sweet wine. When Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [an alien one, since it seemed larger than ours], We boarded the well-polished ship with grieving hearts, but glad to have escaped death and the destruction of my dear companions. The rocket propelled the beautifully-constructed ship at once, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind us. From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

Book Γ

[Τὰ περὶ τῶν ῥαμφοφόρων]

Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
[Μανδὸν ζητούντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν]
 τῷ τοι ζῶα γ' ἔναιε περισσά τε θαῦμα ἰδεσθαι
 τὰς κεφαλὰς κοράκεσσιν εἰκότα, σώματα δ' αὖτε
 ἀνθρώποισι βροτοῖς κνήμας μηρούς τε πόδας τε (5)
 καὶ χεῖρας, αὐδὴν λέξιν τε λόγον τε νόον τε.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ζαπέδω ἔχομεν καλεργέα νῆα
 οὐρανόθεν πτάμενοι καὶ ἔστημεν κατὰβαντες
 ἄνδρες ῥαμφοφόροι ἦλθον ἰδεῖν τε πύθεσθαι (10)
 πάμπολλοι· ἡμεῖς θαυμαζόμεθ' εἰσορόωντες.
 Ἄλλ' οὐκ ῥαμφοφόροι μνήσατ' ἄνδρεσσιν ὄλεθρον
 γηγενεσὶν· ῥα φιλόξεinoι ἡμῖν ἐφάνεσκον.
 Ἀστεῖοίς γε λόγοις ἄμμ' ἄσπάζοντ' ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 κρώζοντες, ὁ μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.
 Βῆμεν ἴμεν ποτὶ ἄστρ' σὺν ἄμμι κορωνοκαρῆνοι (15)
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἄνευ ὀπλων ~ ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν.
 Πάντες γὰρ ἔχομεν κάψησιν ἀμύμονα ὄπλα
 οἷά τε συγγραφέες σαῖ-φαῖ *φείσρους* καλέουσιν
βιαίους· ἐπεὶ ὅστις ἀνὴρ ἀκτῖσι βάλοιτο
 τῶν φείσφων ὃ γ' ἐξαῦτις (20)
 ἄφαντος ἀνέντος¹⁰⁷ ἔπελλεν
 σῶμα τι καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ εἴματα σιγαλοέντα.

¹⁰⁷ Křesadlo has written ἀνευτος, but this doesn't make much sense.
 The sense is difficult to make out anyway.

Book 3

*[The events concerning the beak-bearers]*¹⁰⁸

And then we arrived at a planet after swimming amongst the stars [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe], and on it there lived strange beings that were a wonder to behold: their heads resembled a crow's, and their bodies a mortal human's, with calves, thighs, feet, hands, voice, speech, reason, and thought. But when we moored the beautifully-constructed ship, after flying to the ground from the sky, we disembarked and stood there. Many beak-bearing men came to have a look at us and gain some information. We were amazed when we saw them, but the beak-bearers didn't have destruction in mind for us earthborn men, but seemed rather friendly to us. With polite¹⁰⁹ words they gave us a kind welcome in their land while caw-cawing, and our translator translated their words. We ventured to their city and the crow-headed men accompanied us, but not without weapons ~ as experience had taught us. For we had many excellent weapons in our pockets, the kind sci-fi writers call 'high-intensity phasers'. Since any man who's been hit by the phaser's rays would immediately dissolve into nothing, including his body, soul, and splendid clothes.

¹⁰⁸ This book feels like an expansion on Lucian *True History* ch. 29, which briefly describes Lucian's time in Cloud-cuckoo-land.

¹⁰⁹ Also 'charming, refined, elegant, witty'.

Τοῖς δὲ ὀπλισάμενοι ἄνδρες βῆμεν ποτὶ ἄστν,
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ῥυτῆρ' ἦγον Φράντην πολυγλωσσον
 παντομεταφρηζόντα πεπλασμένον ἱφι¹¹⁰ νόοιο.
 οὐ γὰρ ἄμμι τόδ' ἄστν τοσοῦτως ἦνδανε θυμῷ (25)

ῥαμφώτων ἀνδρῶν ἐπεὶ οὐκ εὖτυκτον ἔφηνεν
 ἀλλὰ δ' οἷ οἰκῖαι καταπτωκυῖαι¹¹¹ ἔησαν
 πολλαὶ· ἄνευ ὑάλων ἦν θυρεῖς στέγματα δ' αὖτε
 ῥυπαρὰ καὶ πολύτρηρα¹¹² πόη δ' ἀναδέδραμε χλωρή.
 ἦγον εἰς μέγαρον μέγαλοιο δόμοιο κενοῖο (30)

καὶ δ' ἡμᾶς ἔνδον γέ καθίζον εἰν κλισίῃσι
 δῶκαν δ' ἄμμι ποτῆτα πίνειν αἰσχροὴν στυγερὴν τε
 καὶ δῶκαν ἔδεμεν σκώληκας καὶ καράβους τε
 ἔντομ' ἀεικέα δ' ἄλλα κορεῖς ἰδὲ καὶ σκολοπένδρας
 ζῶας· ἡμῖν δ' αὖτε φίλος γ' ἔνδον στρέφε γαστήρ. (35)

ἀλλ' οὐτις περ πρῆξις ἔφαινέτο δαινυμένοισιν
 εἰ μὴ ῥαμφωτῆσι φίλοις σκάνδαλλα ποιῆσαι
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἄμμιν εἴκεν ἐρίζειν ῥαμφοφόροις
 παύροισιν περ ἐοῦσι βροτοῖς· ἦσαν μάλα πολλοί.
 οὕτως καὶ ἔδομεν σκολοπένδρας ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ. (40)

Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ βρώμης ὠνησάμεθ' ἦδε ποτῆτος
*[μάλλα περ ἀντικρύ· ἐπεὶ οὕτως ἦνδανε θυμῷ
 καὶ ῥ' ἔνιοι ἔταροι ἐμέοντο κρυπτάδιοί περ]*
 τοῖσιν μύθων ἦρχεν ἄναξ τις ἦδ' ἱεράρχος
 ῥαμφοφόρος· αἱ πάντες ἀκὴν ἔγενοντο σιωπῇ. (45)
(ἄμμι δὲ παντομεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμας)

¹¹⁰ = ἴς.

¹¹¹ = καταπίπτω.

¹¹² Obscure, the Czech offers 'leaky'.

We went to the city armed with these, but I led Franta the polyglot on a leash, our universal translator, moulded from the sinews of thought. The beak-bearers' city didn't please us so much, because it didn't seem well-constructed, instead there were many houses that have collapsed, the windows lacked glass, the roofs were filthy and leaky, and green grass ran up along it. They led us into the hall of a large, empty building, and they sat us down inside on couches, and gave us dreadful-tasting and disgusting drinks to drink. They also gave us worms and beetles to eat, and other disgusting insects, bugs and millipedes that were still alive. Our dear stomachs knotted within us. But no solution revealed itself to us as at the feast for how we could avoid offending our beak-bearing friends,¹¹³ because it's not acceptable for us to challenge the beak-bearers, since we were only a few men in number, and there were very many of them. And so we ate the millipedes, grieving in our hearts. But when we enjoyed the food and drink [we were thoroughly opposed to it, because it didn't please our hearts at all, and so some of the companions even vomited in secret]. One of their lord or high-priest beak-bearers began speaking, and everyone became silent and quiet (but our universal translator translated his words for us).

¹¹³ Sci-fi trope of being unable to eat alien foods, reminds me of *Red Dwarf* season 6 episode 2, 'Legion', which aired in 1993, around the time Křesadlo would have started writing the *Astronautilia*; but Václav Z. J. Pinkava doesn't think his father watched it (23/6/2025).

«Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων ράμφωται ἄνδρες ἀγαυνοί·
 σὺν ἡμῖν νῦν εἰσι ξένοι ἄτοποι τε δυσειδεῖς
 ἀνδράσι σῶμα βροτοῖς περ εἰκότες ἀλλὰ κάρηνα
 θηρέσιν· τόδε γὰρ μέγα ἡμῖν θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι. (50)
 οὐρανόθεν κατάβαν¹¹⁴ τ' εἶδον λαόν τε καὶ ἄστυ.

Τοῖσιν μὲν ξενίην τίμην περ ἐδείξαμεν ἐσθλὴν
 ὥς ἤθει ἐπέοικε θεοὶ κρατρῶς τ' ἐπίτελλον
 οἴω ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ τέρας ἔμμεναι οὐλόμενόν τι.
 Αἶψα δ' ἔπειτα Μέγας Λάμπων ὀρανὸν ἐπιβήσει (55)
 καὶ ἀρύσει λύμφην λευκὴν ὀχετοῦς δία πάντας
 ὁμφὴν μάντευσθαι εἴ τις ζήτησις ἐνείη.

Ἄλλ' ἄγε τὴν σκοπιὴν ἐπιβήσομεν ὄφρα ἴδοιμεν
 βουλὴν Λάμποντος καὶ πεμπέμεναι πυλαωρους
 ῥευματοπυλάων φύλακας καὶ ἐργαστήρας (60)

ζήτησιν ζητεῖν ὄφρ' Ἐκλάμπων ἀποκρινῇ
 ὥς γ' εἶπῃ ὅτι ζῶα πελώρια¹¹⁵ πέμψε χαμάζε.»
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ κόραμος κρώζων καὶ ἄμμιν ἔπειτα
 Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφῆζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα
 λάθρ' ἀλλ' οὐ φανερῶς ἐπεὶ ἠσυχίη γ' ἐνὶ φωνῇ (65)
 λάθων ράμφοφόροις οἷς εἶσατο τηλύγετος θῆρ
 ἄνοος, αὐτὰρ ἄμμε γ' ἄλεξεν ἄγων μεταθῆμα.
 Ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐπευφήμησαν ἄνακτι
 ἄνδρες ράμφοφόροι ζητεῖν ὁμφὴν τε πύθεσθαι.

¹¹⁴ cf. *Iliad* 11.184, 17.545; *Odyssey* 6.281, 20.31; Hesiod *Theogony* 761.

¹¹⁵ Often used of gods in Homer (usually Ares or Hades), sometimes also of heroes such as Hector and Achilles, but also of Polyphemus (cf. *Odyssey* 9.187).

“Listen to my words, you noble beaked fellows: there are aliens amongst us at present, strange and ugly, with bodies that resemble those of mortal men, but with heads that resemble those of beasts. This is a huge wonder for us to behold. They descended from the sky and saw our people and city. We’ve offered them good honour due to a guest, as is the proper custom that the gods authoritatively ordain. But now I suspect that it might be some destructive portent. But soon hereafter, the Mighty Illuminator shall mount the sky and draw white water through every pipe in order to divine the word of the gods if any question is put to him. But come, lets climb the watchtower so we can find out the Illuminator’s will. But come, let us climb the watchtower so we can find out the Illuminator’s will, and dismiss the gate-keepers of the flowing gates and their fellow guards, and ask the question, so that the Brilliant one might answer it and tell us why he sent these mighty beings to the earth.”

So the man, their leader, spoke while caw-cawing, and then Franta, our universal translator, translated his words for us, but secretly, not openly, because he spoke in a quiet voice, escaping the notice of the beak-bearers, to whom he appeared like a dearly beloved and unreasoning animal, but was actually helping us by making us a translation. Then, all the other beak-bearers voiced their agreement with their leader that they had to learn the oracular message.

- Βὰν ἵμεν ἐξ οἴκοιο καὶ ἡμᾶς ἦγον σὺν αὐτοῖς (70)
 ἄστυθ' ἔκ δ' ἐλθόμενοι χθαμαλὸν αὖ ἀφικόμεθ' ἄγρὸν
 τῷ μὲν ἡγεμόνευσε πάγος τις ἡὲ λόφος τις
 ὑψηλὸς ἱκανῶς τῷδε σκοπιὴν περ ἔχεσκον.
 Εἵσβαινόν τε λόφον κόραμος καὶ ἄνερες ἄλλοι
 ῥαμφοφόροι κοράκεσιν ἐοικότες ἡὲ καὶ ἄμμες. (75)
 Ἡἑλίος αὐτῶν γ' ἄτοπος ἦρξεν καταδύναι
 ξεῖνος μικρότερος ἰδὲ λευκότερός τε ἴδεσθαι
 ἡμετέρῳ τὸν ἐγὼν ἐπὶ Γῆς μὲν εἴωθα ὄρασθαι.
 Αὐτὰρ εἰν ἄγρῳ ὄχετοὶ ἦσαν πολύνυδροι
 πολλοὶ σύμπλεκτοι πασῇσι πύλης ἀραρόντες. (80)
 Σήμαινεν κόραμος δὲ ἀτὰρ γ' ἔνιοι ῥαμφωταὶ
 αἶψα ῥέον πεδίοιό τε καὶ οἰκῆματ' ἄνοιγνυν
 ἐστηῶτ' ὀπίσω· σταθμὸς μὲν οἷσατο εἶναι.
 τοῖσιν μὲν οἴκοισιν ἔξηγον ζῶα περισσὰ
 λευκοῖς καὶ λασίοις περ ἐοικότα δασσυνόδεσσι¹¹⁶ (85)
 τόσσου ὀγκηροὺς πόσσου κρατερώνυχας ἵππους
 ἀλλ' ὀρθῶς φοίτησαν ἐπὶ χθονὶ ὥς ἄνθρωποι
 τοῦτο μὲν πῆχεις εἶχον καὶ χεῖρας ἐν ἄκρης.
 τοὺς μὲν δασύποδας ἦγον ῥαμφωταὶ ἐξ αὐλῆς
 καὶ τ' ὦμους ἐπίβησαν ἕως χθόνιοι ἰδὲ παῖδες (90)
 παίζοντες βοτάνη καὶ ἀλλήλους φορέοντες
 εἰν ὥμοισιν ἐοῖς ὥς ἵπποι· σχήματι τῷδε
 ῥαμφωταὶ αὐτοὶ φορέοντ' ὑπὸ δασσυνόδεσσιν
 βὰν δὲ θέειν πεδίου ὀχετῶν πολλῶν διὰ θυνῶν.

¹¹⁶ = δασύπους.

They left the home and took us with them, and after we departed the city we came to a level field, in which some rocky hill or some ridge held dominion. It was sufficiently tall and had a watchtower on it. Their leader climbed the ridge, as did the other beak-bearing men who resembled crows, and so did we. Their unusual and alien sun began to set, it was smaller and whiter to look at than ours, the one I was accustomed to seeing on Earth. But in the field there were many pipes abounding in water, they were complicated and furnished with many valves. Their leader gave a signal and then some of the beaked-men quickly streamed across the plain and unlocked a cage that stood in the back which seemed to be a stable. They led out remarkable creatures from the cage that resembled hairy white rabbits, they were as bulky as strong-hoofed horses, but they strutted about on the ground on their hind legs¹¹⁷ like humans, and these creatures had forearms and hands on the ends of them. The beaked-men led the rabbits out from the court and mounted their shoulders like how children from Earth play in a pasture and carry one another on their shoulders like horses. The beaked-men themselves were carried in this manner by the rabbits, and they went to run across the plain, darting between many of the pipes.

¹¹⁷ Lit. 'in an upright manner'.

- Ἡμεῖς δερκόμενοι οὐ γάρ τι λάβειν δυνάμεσθα (95)
 ἥως ἀμβλυνοοί· μάλα καινὰ τὰ πάντα τέτυκτο.
 Αὐτὰρ ὁδ' ἀρχιερεὺς ποτὶ ἠόα χεῖρας ἄνεσχεν
 εὐχόμενος· ἄλλοι ῥαμφοταῖ μιν μιμέοντο.
 Αἶψα φάος γε φάνη ὡς πνεύματος¹¹⁸ καὶ ἀναδῦναι
 ἦρξεν συνοδίος πλανήτου τόνδε σελήνην (100)
 κεκλίμεναι δυνάμεσθ' ἄνα γὰρ λόγος ἦε σελήνης
 ἡμετέρης· αὐτὰρ μέγα μείζων φαίνετο ἡμῖν.
 Ἦδ' ἀναδυσαμένη μέγα λάμπετο, τῇδε πολῖται
 ῥαμφοφόροι μὲν ἐπευχόμενοι νῦν χεῖρας ἰάλλον
 τῇδε φάος ἐτέτυκτο θοὸν ὡς ἡματι λευκῷ (105)
 πάμφανερόν· σκῆαι βραχέες μελάναι τε γέγοντο.
 Πάντες δ' ἰστάμενοι γ' ἡσθῆσαντ' ἵνα σελήνης
 ἥως ἔλκούσης ἅμε πάντας οὐρανόθι πρὸ
 κουφοτέρους ποίουςα· τὸ γὰρ ξεῖνον μάλα ἦεν.
 Αὐτίκα εἰν ὀχετοῖσιν ὕδωρ ῥέε γ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα (110)
 θύρας ἢ πύλας καὶ ἔμβολα τεχνηόντα
 ἀνοίγνον δέ τε κάτοιγνον ἰδίης μήχεσσι
 ὡς ἔλξις μήνης βαρύτητος ἔλκε τὸ ρεῦμα
 αὐτὰρ ῥαμφοφόροι λίσσοντό γε κουφοδοτῆρα
 ὄφρα γε τοῖσι φανέιε ἔην νημερτέα βουλὴν (115)
 καὶ εἴποι τίδε δὴν σὺν θηρανδράσσι ποίεσθαι
 οὐρανόθεν δὲ πεπτωκῶσιν ὡς δαίμοσιν ἦθος
 [ἄμμι δὲ παντομεταφρήζων εὐχὴν μετέθηκεν.]

¹¹⁸ Obscure, lit. 'like the... of the wind/air'; the Czech offers 'like a ghost'.

We couldn't understand anything when we looked at them, as if we had dull wits, since everything was very novel. But this high priest held up his hands to the east in prayer, and the other beaked-men imitated him. Light suddenly appeared like a ghost and began to emerge from the planet Sputnik,¹¹⁹ we could call this a moon because it resembled our Moon, but it seemed much larger to us. It shone greatly during its ascent, and the beak-bearing citizens pointed their hands towards in in prayer now. Its light became as sharply conspicuous as on a clear day, and shadows became short and dark. But while we were standing we all felt the moon's strength, it was as if it were pulling us all into the sky and making us lighter, since it was very strange. Water immediately flowed from the pipes this way and that way, and valves, gates, and stoppers were crafted. It was opened and closed by its own mechanics as the pull of the attractive power moon pulled the water. But the beak-bearers prayed for the relief-giver to reveal her infallible will to them and tell them what should be done with the beast-men who had fallen from the sky, as is the custom for divinities [our universal-translator translated the prayer for us].

¹¹⁹ Συνοδῖος literally means 'fellow-traveller', just as 'sputnik' does in Russian.

Ἄλλ' ὀλίγοιο χρόνιοι δίαί οἱ ῥαμφοφορευταὶ
 δασσυσπόδων οἱ ἐμπεβάται νόστησαν ἐξ ἀκρὴν (120)
 τῆς σκοπιῆς· παλάμηφι φέρον σκηπτρώματα καλὰ
 ἥως κήρυκες καὶ ἀρχιερεῖα πρόσσειπον
 λυγροῖσιν ἐπέεσσι τὰ δ' ἄμμιν θῆρ μετέθηκεν
 Φράντα μεταφῆζων ὃ πεπλασμένος ἴφι νόοιο·
 «Ἐντελλεῖ ὃ μέγας τόδε καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔστω· (125)
 τοὺς ξείνους κτάμεναι δυσμόρφους θηροκαρῆνους
 ὀξέεσσι ξιφέεσσι κακὴν δὲ τύχην φορέουσι.
 Οὐ γὰρ κεκτιμένοι ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν
 ἐσθλοῖς οὐράνιοις· βδελυροῦ δέ τε κτήματ' ἄνικτος
 φαυλοφίλου ὃς ναίει ἐν βένθεσι βαθυφάραγγος.» (130)
 Ὡς φάν· ῥαμφωταὶ ἰαχῇ μεγάλης ἐπόρουσαν
 εἰς ἡμᾶς παλάμηφι φέροντες φάσγανα λυγρά.
 Ἄμμες δ' ἀρνύμενοι ψυχὰς φείσρους ἐρύσαντες
 ἦρξάμεν ἄκτινησι βάλειν ῥαμφωφόρας ἄνδρας.
 Βλήμενοι ἐξαπίνης διεφάναντ' ἧῦτ' ὀμίχλῃ¹²⁰ (135)
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντοι ἔφυν ἄνδρες καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκον.
 Ἄλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μαρναμένοισιν
 ἄμμων ἄντι πολεῖς περ ἔσαν ἠπλείονες αὐτίς
 ἔδραμον πρὸς κορυφὴν ἀκρῆς ἱεροῖο πάγοιο
 λαῶς βαλλόμενοι καὶ οἰστοῦς τοξάζοντες¹²¹ (140)
 οὐ δὴν φεισρομένοισι γόμωσις ἐξάρκοιτο
 πολλῶν ἐρχομένων· ἐγγὺς ἦν αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.

¹²⁰ cf. *Iliad* 1.359.

¹²¹ Throwing large rocks is a feat of pre-mechanical strength, but is not a match for futuristic technology, cf. Mader 2015:595 (*Mnemosyne* 68) on *Aeneid* 12.920-7: “the archaic stone-thrower is no match for ‘modern’ mechanized warfare”; also evokes the Laestrygonian and Polyphemus episodes of the *Odyssey*.

But for a short time the beak-bearers, the ones who were riding the rabbits, returned to the top of the watch-tower; and they carried fair sceptres in their hands like heralds and spoke to the high-priest with fatal words , but our pet translator Franta, who had been moulded from the sinews of thought, translated it for us.

“The mighty one commands the following and it must be accomplished: kill these deformed aliens who have the heads of beasts with sharp swords, they carry misfortune about with them. For they don’t belong to the immortal, noble, celestial gods, but they are the property of brutal lord who loves evil and who dwells in the depths of the deep abyss.”

So he spoke, and the beaked-men sprung at us with a loud shriek, carrying deadly swords in their hands. But we, after drawing out our phasers in an attempt to preserve our lives, began to strike the beak-bearing men with our rays. The ones that had been struck immediately became transparent just like a mist, and then the men became invisible and no longer existed. But no solution revealed itself to us as we fought, the city was against us, and more were running across the top of the peak of the holy hill. Hurling stones and shooting arrows from their bows. But there wasn’t enough ammunition to reload the phasers whilst the multitude was on its way – utter destruction was close at hand.

Ἡμεῖς μὲν κλαίοντες ἐπεύχεσθαι μεμάαμεν
 εἰ κέν τις ζῶη θεὸς εἶν κόσμοιο βάθεσιν.
 Ἐξαπίνης λύσις ἅμμι φάνη περ ἄνελπις ἅμαντις· (145)
 ἦλθε πετανόμενος πρὸς ἡμᾶς καρτὺς ὁμιλος
 ζῶων ἁλλοκότων τῶν ῥαμφοφόρων περ ὁμοίων
 ἀλλὰ σφίν γ' ὑμένες ἦσαν ὥς νυκτερίδεσσιν
 ἐξ καρπὸν χειρὸς τετανυγμένοι εἰς ποδὸς ἄρθρον
 τοῖσιν σεῖοντές γε πέτοντο πρὸς πάγον αἰπύν. (150)
 Οἶδε πεζοὶ βάλλον λαέσσιν καὶ βελέεσσιν
 αὐτὰρ ἀηεριοὶ σφε κατέπτυνον οἷς ῥάμφηφιν
 πτύσματ' ἀεικελίῳ γλοιωδέϊ ἢ βδελυρῷ τε.
 Ὅστινα ῥαμφοφόρων γε πεζῶν βάλε πτύσμα κελαινὸν
 ὀφθαλμοὺς ὅδε οὐκ ἴδεειν δύνατ' οὐδὲ μάχεσθαι. (155)
 Ἄλλοι μὲν βάλλον κακὰ πτύσματα αὐτὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι
 ἡμᾶς εἴλοντες ἔφερον ἀπονόσφι πάγοιο.
 Καὶ ἅμμι ἦνεγκαν εἰς οὖρεα ὑψικάρηνα
 τῶν μὲν σφιν πόλις ἔσκεν ἀνήβατος¹²² ἢ καὶ ἄπορθος.
 Οὐδὲ τε ῥαμφοφόροι πτερυγῶται αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον (160)
 Μνήσαντ' ἀνδράσι ἅμμιν ἐπεῖδ' ἐχθροὶ τετύγονται
 ῥαμφοφοροῖσι πεζοῖς· καὶ ἴδοντες γ' ἅμμε σάωσαν.
 Ἦγον εἰς μέγαρον καὶ εἰς αὐτῶν βασιλῆα.
 Ἄμμε δ' ἀμφικομένους εἶδεν καὶ εἵρετο ἡμᾶς
 γλώσση ἁλλοδαπῇ τῆς οὐτις γνώματ' ἔχεσκεν (165)
 αὐτὰρ ὁ παντομεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.

¹²² = ἄβατος.

Weeping, we tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe. Suddenly a solution appeared to us, un hoped for and unexpectedly. There came flying towards us a mighty flock of unusual beings that resembled the beak-bearers, but they had skin that was stretched from the wrist of the hand to the ankle of the foot like a bat's¹²³. It flew to the lofty hill by waving these. The infantry struck them with stones and arrows, but the air-borne ones spat on them from their beaks with spittle that was deadly, gelatinous, and disgusting. He wasn't able to see which of the land-bound beak-bearers the dark spittle had hit in the eye, nor could he fight on. Some shot out foul spit, but others snatched us up and carried us far away from the hill. And they brought us to the high-peaked mountains, in which their city was impassable and impregnable. But the winged beak-bearers didn't consider inflicting utter destruction upon us men, because they're the enemies of the land-bound beak-bearers, and saved us once they'd seen us. They led us into a hall and to their king. And he met us once we'd arrived and asked us in an alien language which none of us knew, but our universal-translator translated his words.

¹²³ Νυκτερίς is the modern Greek for 'bat'; the Czech translates it as vampýřům, which is a transliteration of the taxonomic genus for the 'spectral bat', *Vampyrum spectrum*.

Τῷ γὰρ ἐγὼ μὲν πάντα λέγων εἶπον κατὰ κόσμον¹²⁴.
 Ὅς μὲν γηθηθεῖς ἄμμ' εἰν κλισίῃσι κάθισεν
 καὶ δ' ἐκέλευσε φέρειν ἡμῖν βρώμην τε πότον τε
 ἡμεῖς μὲν στυγέοντες ἐμείναμεν εἶδαρ ἀεικέες (170)
 μνησάμενοι σκολοπένδρησιν ἰδὲ σκωλήκεσσι
 ῥαμφοφόρων γε πεζῶν· τοὶ γὰρ πολὺ φέρτεροι ἦσαν
 ὀψοποιοὶ ἰδὲ καὶ ξένιοι· ἐσθλὸν δέ τ' ἔδωκαν
 βρῶμα τε καὶ οἶνον ὥς ξεινοδόκοις ἐπέοικεν.
 Ἄμμι δὲ ῥαμφοφόρων πτεράνων κόραμος ἐρέεινεν (175)
 τῶν ὀχετῶν πολλῶν θύρων τ' αἶνιγμα λόγον τε.
 Ἄμμες ἀκούοντες θαυμάζομεν ἔργα περισσά.
 Ἦν σύστημα ὁδῶν ὑγρῶν θύρων τε πύλων τε
 καὶ χώνων μεγάλων πιστώνων καὶ ὀχετῶν τε
 κομπουτῆρ ὁ μέγας ὕδραυλος θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι. (180)
[κομπουτῆρα δέ μιν βρύθανες ἄνδρες καλέουσιν
ἀλλὰ δέ μιν Δαναοὶ καλέουσιν ὑπολοιστήν.]
 Τοῦ μὲν ἐνεργεῖν πόρεν ἱς μήνης βαρύτητος
 ὥς ἔλξις ταύτης ὀγκηρῆς ἔλκε τὸ ρεῦμα
 καὶ τῷ παμμήνης καιρῷ ἰδὲ νομουνίης (185)
 καρτοτάτη ~ τῷ κομπουτῆρ κάλλιστα λογίζει.
 Τὸν μὲν κομπουτῆρ' ἄνδρες τεῦξαν προπάτωρες
 δηρὸν ἀπολύμενοι ἐξίτηλοι οὐ περ ἐόντες
 καὶ ἔνδον θῆκαν προγράμματα πολλὰ τε πυκνά.

¹²⁴ cf. *Iliad* 2.214, 5.759, 8.12, 10.472, 11.48, 12.85, 17.205, 24.622; *Odyssey* 3.138, 8.179, 8.489, 14.363, 20.181.

To which I answered everything properly in reply. He joyfully sat us down on a couch and gave the order to bring us food and drink. We awaited the horrible food in fear, remembering the millipedes and worms of the land-bound beak-bearers. But for your information, they were much better cooks and hosts, and they gave us good food and wine, as is proper for one who receives guests. And the leader of the winged bird-bearers asked us the riddle of all the pipes and sluices, and about their meaning. Listening, we were amazed by the extraordinary works. There was a system of paths of water and sluices and gates, and great funnels, pistons, and pipes that comprised a mighty hydraulic computer which was a wonder to behold¹²⁵. (British men call it a ‘computer’, but the Danaans call it a ‘hypologistes’). Which the power of the weighty moon gave energy, since the attractive power of that bulky moon pulls the stream and it is strongest at the right time of the month as well as during the new moon. At which time the computer makes the best calculations. This computer was constructed by their forefathers, who are long since dead but not yet lost to memory, and they put many complex programs inside it.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ I’ve extended the translation of σύστημα from ‘a system’ to ‘system of X that made up Y’, the computer is the ‘system’.

¹²⁶ Weise (2024:279) suggests that a possible source for this computer is ‘Landru’ from *Star Trek: the Original Series* season 1 episode 21, “The Return of the Archons”.

Τοῖσιν μὲν γ' ἔθελον ζῶνῃν πάντων κανονίζειν (190)
 εὐλογικῶς ἰδίην καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα πολίτων
 καιρὸν τοῦ ἀρότου σπορίης καὶ συγκομιδῆς τε.
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' οἱ προπάτωρες ἔπ' ἐσσομένοιαν ἔδειξαν
 αἰτίην τε λόγον κομπουτῆρος πολυπύκνου
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τοῖς εἶπον θεῖόν γ' ἔμεναι μέγα ἔργον (195)
 φαῖνον τὴν βουλὴν μήνης τὴν δαίμονα θῆκαν
 Δεῖσαν μὴ τις ἀνὴρ περ ἀμειβήσῃ κανῶνα¹²⁷
 καὶ βλαβερὸν γε νόμον θεῇ ἄστοισι πολέσσιν.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ κομπουτῆρα χρόνος βέβλαψε¹²⁸ καὶ αὐτός·
 οἳ δ' ὅχετοί γε πολλοὶ φυκίοισι πεφράγματο λυγροῖς (200)
 οὐδὲ θύραι πείθοντ' ὥς ἱς ὕδατός σφε κέλευεν
 οἴγειν ἢ κλῆειν λογικῶν γε νόμων κατὰ πρῆξιν.
 Ἦρξε δὲ κομπουτὴρ βλαβερῶς τε κακ' ὑπολογίζειν
 δόγματα καὶ κρίσεις ἀνόους ἀγγεῖλαι εἴωθεν.
 Αὐτὰρ ῥαμφοφόροι περὶ τούτων δίχ' ἐδάσαντο. (205)
 Οἱ μὲν πεζοὶ ἐόντες ἐπειθέατ' ἀγγελίων
 ἀλλὰ πεταυριστὰι ἔγνων ληρήματα εἶναι.

¹²⁷ Ancestors being afraid that their descendants will '*change the canon*' is clearly *very* metatextual. New vs. Old.

¹²⁸ cf. Cunliffe Homer s.v. βλέπτω 6.A., '*To affect the mind of adversely, smite with mental blindness*', e.g., *Iliad* 9.507, 9.512, 15.724; *Odyssey* 14.178.

In this manner they wanted to regulate everyone's life in a logical way, including all the actions of both the individual and one's fellow citizens, as well as the right time for the planting of seeds and harvesting¹²⁹. But their forefathers did not explain to their descendants the origin or reason for the complex computer, but told them that it was a divine and mighty work that revealed the will of the moon, and they made it a goddess. They were afraid that someone might change the regulation, and pass a harmful law on the many townsfolk. But time itself has driven the computer out of its senses as well. Many of the pipes were blocked by fatal seaweed, and the sluices aren't persuaded to open or close like the power of the water commands them according to the enactment of the laws of logic in practice. The computer began to harmfully calculate poor opinions and became accustomed to announcing thoughtless judgements¹³⁰. But the beak-bearers became divided amongst themselves into two groups: the land-bound ones obeyed the announcements, but winged ones knew that it was nonsense.

¹²⁹ This description reminds me of Aratus' *Phaenomena* 1-18, in that the Stoics believe Zeus gives clear and benevolent signs to mortals, especially to farmers for when to plant different kinds of seeds. In Křesadlo's case, it's not the divine *pneuma* (Zeus) that gives benevolent signs to mortals, but a *Computer* – Technology and science replaces god in the *Astronautilia* (cf. Weise 2024:272, “it becomes clear through this feature [i.e., the lack of Homeric gods] that modern science has taken the position of the gods in his epic”).

¹³⁰ Sci-fi trope of the rogue AI, e.g., HAL in 2001: *A Space Odyssey*.

Τῶν μὲν ἕρις ὥρσεν εἰν ἀνδράσι ῥαμφοφόροισι
καὶ πόλεμος· αἰὲν πτέρυγες δὲ πεζοῖσι μάχονται
οὐδ' ἄρα δὴ τις παῦσις ἐγίγνετο ἐχθρομένοισι. (210)

Κομπουτήρ ἄνοος δὲ πεζοὺς μάρνασθαι ἄνωγεν.
Ταῦτα δ' ἔφη κόραμος αὐτὸς προὔρχετο μύθος.
«Εἴ κέν τις βλαβερὸν μῆχαρ μὲν ἐπισκευάζοι
τοῦ πολέμου τέλεσιν καὶ ληρισμῶν ὃ ποίοιτα
Ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς ταύτη γνώμη τέχνης γε λέλοιπεν. (215)

Ναὶ καὶ μεύ γ' ἔχομεν γεγράμμενα σχήματα πάντων
παλαιῶν προγόνων ἅπο γὰρ πυκινῶς ἀραρόντα.
Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ξείνους αἵτουμαι ἔπεσιν
ἅμμε δ' ἄλεξέμεναι ὀρθῶσαι τ' ὑπολογιστήν.
Οὕτως εἰρήνη ὄλβος τε ἔπετα¹³¹ νήσει (220)

εἰς χώραν· τούτου δέ σε λίσσομαι εἵνεκα λαοῦ.»
Ὡς ἔφατ' ἡμεῖς αὐτ' ἐλογίζομεν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
εἷ περ νοστήσαντες ἐπὶ πλοίοιο φίλοιο
εἴσβαντες ἔνδον καὶ πύραυλόν γ' ἐλάσαντες
πταίμεθα εἰς ὀρανὸν λελιπόντες ῥαμφοφορευτὰς (225)

ἢ δ' αὐτίς γε μένειν· θύρας τ' ὀχετοὺς τ' ὀρθωμεν.
Ἄμμι λογιζόμενοισι δοάσσατο κέρδιον εἶναι
αὐτίς περ μένεμεν καὶ ῥαμφοφόροισιν ἄλεξιν
οὐνεκα τὴν ψυχὴν ἐσάωσαν οἱ πτερυγωταί.

¹³¹ = ἐπ' ἔτος (?)

A quarrel arose over this amongst the beak-bearing men, as well as a war. The winged ones are in a never-ending fight with the land-bound ones, and there's been no end to the fighting between these enemies at all. The foolish computer has been urging the land-bound ones to fight. The leader himself said these things and continued in this speech.

“If anyone could repair this harmful machine, he would also be bringing an end to the war and nonsense. But the knowledge of how to do it has abandoned us. Yes, we even have the handwritten schematics for all the ancient things that were cunningly constructed by our ancestors. But I beg you aliens in your own words to lend us your aid and rebuild¹³² the computer. Thus peace and happiness would return to our land forever, I beg you for the sake of my people.”

So he spoke, and we calculated between this option and that option: whether, after returning to our dear ship, getting inside, and propelling the rocket, we should fly up into the sky, leaving behind the beak-bearers, or stay behind and repair the sluices and pipes. It seemed better for us as we were make our calculations to stay behind and lend a hand to the beak-bearers, since the winged ones had saved our lives.

¹³² Lit. ‘straighten up’.

Αὐτὰρ ἶδεν κτῆσιν κομπουτῆρος ἐθέλησα¹³³. (230)

Αὐτίκα γ' ἤνεγκαν διφθείρας ἄνδρες ἄριστοι
ἀρχαίας· τὰς δ' ἅμμες ἐζητοῦμεν σκοπεόντες.
Ἡμῖν μηχανικὸς κορυφαῖος ἡγεμόνευσεν
νηὸς ἡμετέρης πυκινὰ φρεσὶ σχήματα εἰδώς.
Βοῦρδα δέ οἱ ὄνομ' ἔσκεν ἀριστεύησεν ἀπάντων (235)
μηχανικῶν ἠλεκτρονικῶν τοὺς περ ἐνόησα.

Τὸν μὲν σὺν διφθείρησιν ἀγρόνδε πέπομπα
σὺν φύλακοιν δὲ δύοιν φείσροισιν εὖ γ' ἀραρόντοιν
τοὺς σκέπτειν ὀχέτους πάντας θύρας τε πύλας τε
πόσσοι δ' ἀσκηθεῖς εἶην πόσσοι δὲ πονηροί. (240)

Πάντες εἰν κεφαλῇφι φόρουν κοράκων προσόωπα
ἀνδρᾶσι ῥαμφοφόροισι ἐοικότες ἀπτερυγέσσιν.
Αὐτὰρ ἀηέριοί σφε γ' ἄνω πτέρυγές τε φύλασσον.
Βοῦρδα δὲ σκεψάμενος ὕδραυλον κομπουτῆρα
ἅψ ἀπονόστησεν σὺν ἄλλοις εἰς πτολίεθρον (245)
ἀσκηθῆς καὶ ἀνωφθεῖς¹³⁴ δὲ τ' ἀβλήμενος ἦλθεν.
Ἡματι τῷ πρώτῳ τάδε χρήσιμα ἔργα ποίησεν
ῥαμφοφόροις· ἡμεῖς δὲ κατευδόμεθ' εἰν μεγάροισιν
παῦρά γ' ἀποπνῦσαι καὶ πρηξάμεναι γλυκὺν ὕπνον.

¹³³ I reached the translation 'But I wanted to see how to make the computer myself' by extending the meaning of κτῆσιν κομπουτῆρος from 'the acquisition of the computer' to 'how I myself could acquire the computer', i.e., how Oudeis could make one himself (cf. LSJ s.v. κτάομαι I.1, 'procure for oneself').

¹³⁴ Ought to be ἀνωφθεῖς (constructed from ἀν- + ὀφθεῖς, aor. pass. part. m. sg. from ὀράω).

But I wanted to see how to make the computer myself. The noble old men immediately brought me the blue-prints¹³⁵, and we examined them by looking at them carefully. Our chief mechanic led the way since he was well acquainted with the complex schematics of our own ship. 'Burda' was his name,¹³⁶ and he was the best of all the electricians that I've known. I sent him with the blue-prints to the field with two guards that were well equipped with phasers to examine all the pipes and sluices and gates closely and see which ones were sound and which were faulty. Everyone wore masks of crow-faces on their heads that resembled the ones that belonged to the wingless beak-bearers. Plus, the winged air-borne ones kept watch on the from above. Burda, having inspected the hydraulic computer, returned back home again with the others to the citadel, he came unharmed, unseen, and without being hit. We did this useful work for the beak-bearers on the first day, and we slept in the hall to take a short breather and enjoy sweet sleep.

¹³⁵ lit. 'prepared hide, membranes', i.e., the 'vellum' used to make codices. This is metonymy for 'blue-prints'.

¹³⁶ cf. Elektronický slovník staré češtiny (ESSČ) s.v. *burda*, "něco těžkého, tíha, náklad" ("something heavy, a weight, a burden").

- Ἕμους δ' ἡριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠὼς (250)
[ξεινιακὴ· μείζων τῆς ἡμετέρης ἐφάνεσκεν]
 τῆμος εἰς ἀγρὸν πτάμενοι ἄνδρες ἐλέλουθαι¹³⁷
 ῥαμφοφόροι φόρεον σφέτερόν γ' ἡγημόνα Βούρδην
 καὶ εἰς κομπουτῆρα πέσον γ' ὕδραυλολογιστὴν
 ὀρθῶσαι δ' ἤρξαν βλάβεια βλαβερά πολὺπικρα (255)
 αὐτομάτου· Βούρδου ἱερὴ ἱς¹³⁸ ἡγεμόνευσεν.
 Νεῦσαν ἐσπέριοι ἀσκηθέες ἦεδ' ἀνωφθεῖς
 αἰνῶς κάμνοντες τετελευτηκόντες ἅπαντα.
 Γήθησεν βασιλεὺς καὶ ἄμμι χάριν γε δέδωκεν
 ἐλπόμενος πολέμου τὸ τέλος τ' ὄλβον τε νέεσθαι. (260)
 Τῶν ἄρα χαιρόμενοι δάσαμεν μὲν ἀμύμονα δαῖτα
 πάντες ἐζόμενοι κρέα δ' ἄσπετα καὶ μύσου ἠδὺ
 παννύχιοι μείνοντες ἐς ἥλιον δ' ἀνάδυντα.
 Ἕμους δ' ἡριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠὼς
[ξεινιακὴ· μείζων τῆς ἡμετέρης ἐφάνεσκεν] (265)
 νῆα μὲν εὐξέστην ἐπιβήσαμεν ἠδεῖ θυμῷ
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτοιο δ' ἀλέξαντες κοράκεσσιν.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον πλάνην ξεῖνον λελιπόντες
 Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο (270)
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.

¹³⁷ Should be ἐλέλιζαν (aor. 3rd. pl. indic. act. of ἐλελίζω).

¹³⁸ Also used in the *Odyssey* in the same *sedes* to describe Telemachus only, cf. 2.409, 16.476, 18.60, 18.405, 21.101, 21.130, 22.354.; a similar phrase is ἱερὸν μένος, which is mostly used to describe Alcinoos, but is also used to describe Antinous once (18.34) “where the suitor Antinous is assuming command most obnoxiously in Odysseus’ house in Odysseus’ presence” (Murray & Dimock 1919:77, Loeb 104).

When Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [an alien one, since it seemed larger than ours], then the winged beak-bearers flew to the field, taking Burda with them as their own leader, and flew down into the computer that makes its calculations with water. They began to fix the harmful complex damage of the computer, and Burda's sacred power led the way. They returned in the evening unharmed and unseen, they were terribly tired and finished with everything at last. The king rejoiced and thanked us, hoping that this would mark the end of the war and that prosperity would return. We were glad at this and dined on an excellent feast comprised of meat and sweet wine as we all reclined, staying there all night long and up to the rising of the sun. When Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [an alien one, since it seemed larger than ours], we boarded our well-polished ship in high spirits, glad to have escaped death and have given aid to the crows. The rocket propelled the beautifully-constructed ship at once, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind us. From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

Book Δ

[Τὰ περὶ ζωοφύτων]

Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 Μανδὺς ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 τῷ περ ζῶα γ' ἔναιε περισσά τε θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι
 φύλλων ἢ φυτῶν μὲν εἰκότα ποικιλομόρφων¹³⁹
 ἀλλὰ δὲ ρίμφα κίνεισθαι ἕως θήρες ἔδυναντο. (5)
 χλωροὶ ἔσαν μὲν ἅπαντες ἐπεὶ γὰρ χλωροοφυλλή
 σφὶν εἰν χρωτὶ ἔνεσκε· τὸ “χλωροοφυλλή” ἔθηκαν
 οὖνομα γ' οὐσίῃ πυκινὸν σύνταγμα ἐχούση·
 πεντήκοντα Τσῆ καὶ πέντε μὲν· Ἄ δέ τε ἐπτά,
 Ὡς ἔν' Ἐν πίσυρες ἰδὲ καὶ κλυτὰ ἐννέα Ἑμγη¹⁴⁰. (10)
 Οὗτος ὁ πρῶτος τύπος ἐστὶν, δεύτερος αὖτε
 τῷ προτέρῳ μὲν ὅμοιος ἐὼν δεκάκις μᾶλλον περ
 ὑδρογόνου κατέχει· ἄλλως δέ τε ῥ' ἴσοι ἔασιν.
 Τῆς δέ γ' ἀλεξαμένης φορβῆς τινος οὐκ ἐδέοντο
 ἀλλὰ γε φαοτοσυντιθέναι αὐτοὶ ἐδύναντο. (15)
 Τοῦς μὲν θαυμάζοντες ἐφοιτῶμεν ἐνὶ πλάνῃ.
 Θηροφυτοὺς πολέας ὀρόωντες γηθοσύνησιν.
 Εἶσατο δ' ἡμῖν εἶναι ἕως παράδεισος ἀμύμων.

¹³⁹ cf. Aristophanes *Wealth* 530.

¹⁴⁰ Křesadlo must've confused ἐννέα (9) with ἑνα (1, m. acc.) since no variant formula for chlorophyll has Mg, the closest to Křesadlo's formula is C₅₅H₇₀O₆N₄Mg (*Chlorophyll b*), but again, no nine Magnesium. Hence, I've translated ἐννέα as if it were a form of εἷς; similarly, for ἐπτά, Křesadlo must've meant ἐβδομήκοντα, so I've translated it that way.

Book 4

[The events concerning the zoophytes¹⁴¹]

And then we arrived at a planet after swimming amongst the stars, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe, on which there lived extraordinary beings that were a wonder to behold, they resembled leaves or plants that come in different shapes and sizes, but were able to move quickly like animals. They were entirely green because there was chlorophyll in their skin, and 'chlorophyll' was the name they gave to a substance that had a complex formula: fifty-five C, seventy H, six O, four N, and the famous singular Mg. This is the first type, the second type is similar to the prior but it does have ten times as much Hydrogen, otherwise they're identical¹⁴². Thanks to this, they don't require any food, instead they can photosynthesise it. We went around the planet as we marvelled at these and rejoiced while looking at the many kinds of animal-plants. It seemed like an excellent paradise to us.

¹⁴¹ Lit. 'animal-plants', a discredited taxonomic group; look up the 'Vegetable Lamb of Tartary'.

¹⁴² This is confusing because the formula Křesadlo has just given is already the second type (*Chlorophyll b*, $C_{55}H_{70}O_6N_4Mg$) rather than the first type (*Chlorophyll a*, $C_{55}H_{72}O_5N_4Mg$).

Χώρη τῇ φύσεις οὐ πᾶν κτάμεναι ἔδεοντο
 ἀλλήλας ἵνα ζῆν ἄλλ' ἡελίου καθαροῖο (20)
 ἀκτῖναι καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γῆ τρέφει ἥματα πάντα.
 Τρὶς μάκαρες θῆρες καὶ τετράκις οἶδ' ἐγένοντο
 χλωροοφυλλοφόροι· ἐπεὶ χρεῖη οὐκ ἔνεστι
 μήνιος ἢ φόβον¹⁴³· ἀλλήλους οὐ φονέουσιν.
 Ἡμεῖς ταύτ' ἐπέεσσι λογιζόμενοι πετροέσσι (25)
 φοιτῶμεν χώρη τοὺς θηροφυτοὺς ὀρόωντες.
 αὐτίκα θηροφυτός τις ἀκανθοφόρος ἐπόρουσεν
 μακρὸς καὶ φοβερὸς κάκτῳ τροχέοντί γ' εἰκῶς.
 Ὅς μὲν ἀνάϊξας λάβεν ἄνερα ἀστοπορευτὴν
 ἐξ ἐτάρων καὶ μιν προυβοσκίδι οὐτάσε σῶμα, (30)
 ὃς μεγάλως ἰάχεν χόωτων ποσὶ σπαιρόμενός¹⁴⁴ τε
 ἀλλ' ὅγε θηροφυτός μιν ἄφελκεν αἶμα κελαινὸν
 ἐκ φωτός· ἀλλ' ἄμμες ἐπεῖ στύγος γυῖα λέλοιπεν
 πρῶτον φείσοισιν βάλλομεν θήλοντα πέλωρον.
 Βλήμενος ἐξαπίνης διεφύκατο ἦϋτ' ὀμίχλῃ (35)
 καὶ τόδ' ἄφαντον ἔφυ τὸ πέλωρ καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκεν.
 Ἄμμες δ' αὐτε κατὰ σπουδὴν δράμομεν ποτὶ νῆα
 καὶ φερόμεν γ' ἔταρον τετρώμενον· τὸν θεράπευσεν
 ἀνὴρ ἱητὴρ εἰν νηὶ ἕως ἐπέοικεν.

¹⁴³ cf. *Astr.* 2.233.

¹⁴⁴ = ἀσπαίρω, cf. Cunliffe *Homer s.v.* ἀσπαίρω 1, “to gasp or pant in the death-struggle”, e.g., *Odyssey* 8.526.

It was a land in which no animals need to kill one another in order to live, but rather the rays of the pure sun and water and soil gives daily nourishments. Three and four times blessed are the animals are chlorophyll-bearing, since have no need for anger or fear, because they don't slay one another. As we considered these things in winged words, we roamed the land staring at the animal-plants. Suddenly some thorn-bearing animal-plant sprung up, it was large and fearful like a running cactus. Having leapt up, it snatched up one of my companions who journeyed amongst the stars with us, and using its proboscis it pierced his body as he shrieked loudly while kicking his feet and gasping for breath¹⁴⁵. But the animal-plant drew the dark blood out from the man, and after hatred abandoned his limbs, we first struck the swollen monster with our phasers. Struck, it suddenly became transparent like mist and then the monster became invisible and no longer existed. We urgently ran back to the ship and brought our wounded companion with us. He was tended to by the doctor in the ship, as was fitting.

¹⁴⁵ Closest analogue in sci-fi I can think of is a Triffid from John Wyndham's *Day of the Triffids*, but killer plant/animals could also evoke *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *Evil Dead* (1981), and *Little Shop of Horrors* (1960/1986); A classical analogue could include the vine-women episode in Lucian's *True History* (1.8) when Lucian's comrades are absorbed into beings that are part human and part plant; plants impeding a *nostos* also occurs in book 9 of the *Odyssey* when encountering the Lotus-eaters (9.80-104).

- Ἐνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι (40)
 λείπειν πλανήτην ἔθελον καὶ κίνδυνον αὐτοῦ
 ἀλλὰ με μοῦνον ἄνωγεν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλον κῆρ
 πλανήτην γε κατασκοπέειν καὶ πάντα ἐρευνᾶν.
 Ἀσβέστη πολυπρηγμοσύνη¹⁴⁶ καὶ φιλομαθείη¹⁴⁷
 εἶλε νόον· διὰ ἣν αἰτὶν θηροφυτοὶ τοι (45)
 ἄλλους ἀλλήλους τε μάχῃ φονέειν ἐθέλοντο
 φαοτοσυτιθέναι φορβὴν ζωῆς περ ἴδοντες.
 Ἀτὰρ ἐγὼ μὲν λισσόμενος καὶ ἀντιλογίζων
 ἄνθρωποιν δὲ δύοιν περ ἔπειθου φαίδιμου ἦτορ
 σύν μοι μὲν σκοπέειν ἵμεναι καὶ ἄλλα μάθεσθαι. (50)
 Ἡμεῖς τεύχεα¹⁴⁸ πυκνὰ ἐδύσαμεν¹⁴⁹ οἷα ῥ' ἔοικεν
 ναυτῆρας κόσμοιο φορεῖν εἰ κίνδυνος εἴη
 καὶ φείσοις ἀραρόντες ἵμεν πάλιν θηωροῦντες.
 Πολλὰ δ' ἐθησάμεθα ξένα πρήγματα θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι
 θηρυφυτοὺς πολέας ξείνους μικροὺς μεγάλους τε (55)
 πάσῃσιν μόρφῃσι τάδ' ὑπολάβειν γε δύναιτο
 φρὴν βροτὸς ἀνθρώπου φαντάζεμεν ἢ περᾶν τε
 ἄλλοι μὲν χλωροὶ καὶ χλωροῦ χρώμασι πᾶσιν
 ἦσαν οἷδ' ἄλλοι κυανόχροοι καὶ κελανοὶ τε
 ἄλλοι μὲν ξανθοὶ ἦσαν ἄλλοι δέ τ' ἐρυθροί. (60)
 Οἱ μὲν θηροφυτοὶ φοίτησαν τῇ δ' ἐπὶ χώρῃ
 ἀλλήλοισι μόρον καὶ ὄλεθρον βυσσοδόμευον
 σχήμασι παντοδαποῖσι τάδ' ὑπολάβειν γε δύναιτο
 φρὴν βροτὸς ἀνθρώπου φαντάζεμεν ἢ περᾶν τε.

¹⁴⁶ cf. Aristophanes *Acharnians* 833, Plato *Republic* 434b7 and b9.

¹⁴⁷ cf. Plato *Republic* 499e2, *Timaeus* 90b6, Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1117b29.

¹⁴⁸ cf. Cunliffe Homer s.v. τεύχεα.

¹⁴⁹ = ἐνεδύσαμεν.

And so all the rest of my trusty companions wanted to abandon this planet and its danger, but the dear heart in my breast bid that I alone scout out the planet and explore it all. An unquenchable curiosity and love of learning overpowered my mind to know for what reason the animal-plants wanted to kill each other in battle despite knowing how to photosynthesise life-sustaining food¹⁵⁰. However, after being begged and countering their claims, I convinced the hearts of two of my illustrious men to come explore with me and learn other things in addition. We put on the sorts of compact armour that resemble the ones astronauts wear if there is danger, and went back to make our observations, furnished with phasers. We viewed many alien things that were wonders to behold, there were many strange animal-plants, small and large, in all the kinds of shapes that the mortal mind of man can conceive or imagine and pass through¹⁵¹. Some were green and came in all shades of green, others were blue in shade and black, others were yellow, and others were red. The animal-plants walked about and by this place they were pondering in the depths of their souls over death and destruction for one another in all the kinds of ways that the mortal mind of man can conceive or imagine and pass through.

¹⁵⁰ This needless killing is reminiscent of the Caterpillar/Butterfly episode of Naomi Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*.

¹⁵¹ I believe this means seeing an object in the mind's eye (via *phantasia*, 'imagination') and then manipulating that imagined object in the mind, i.e., 'penetrating' the imagined image.

- Ἄμμες ἐποιχόμενοι θαυμάζομεν εἰσορόωντες. (65)
 Ξηρὸς ἔην ἢ χθὼν καὶ ἐρῆμος· τεῖρετο δ' αἰνῶς
 ἡέλιος τούτον συστήματος μάλα γε θερμὸς
 θερμότερος τοῦ ἡμετέρου καὶ ὀξύτερος τε.
[Ἄλλ' ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν κατὰ τεύχεα ψυχροφόρησιν
τέχνησιν πυκινῇσιν ἐν εἵμασι εὖ ἀραρυῖαν] (70)
 οὐδ' ἄρ τίς γε φάνη ὕδατος ἔαρ ἢ δρόσος ἄλλη
 ἀλλὰ δὲ παμξήρη μὲν ἔην χθὼν ἀτρύγετός τε,
 αἰεὶ καὶ ἄνεμος θερμὸς ξερὸς πνεύε κατ' αὐτὴν
 ξηραίνων μὲν ἅπαντα θοῶς σὺν θηροφυτοῖσιν.
 Οἱ γὰρ ὥς ἐνόησα δέον λύμφην περ ἀφῦσσαι (75)
 ἀλλήλων ἐπεὶ οὐκ ὕδατος κρήνη τις ἔνεσκεν.
 Οὐ γὰρ τοῖσι βίον χρáισμειν δυνάμεις ἐδύναντο
 φαοτοσυνθέσεως χωρὶς ὕδατος πολυζήλου¹⁵².
 Ἀλλὰ γέ μοι λόγος ἦλθε νέος περὶ θηροφυτῶν τῶν
 ὥς εἰν τῷ βάρθρῳ τροφίμῃ ἢ πυραμίς αὐτῶν (80)
[πυραμίδα τροφίμην περ ζωλόγοι καλέουσιν]
 ζῶα δέοι ἔχεμεν¹⁵³ τάδ' ὕδωρ ὀρθῶς ποτεύουσιν.
 Ἄλλως οὐκ εἴη δυνατὸν ζῆν τῇδ' ἐνὶ χώρῃ.
 Βῆμεν ἵμεν ζητεῖν τάδε ζῶα περισσὰ πίνοντα
 ὥς ἡμᾶς ἦγοιεν ἐπὶ κρήνης μελανύδρου (85)
 κρυπτῆς· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔοϊκ' εἶναι πάντεσσι κάτοπτος
 εἰ πλεῖστοι φυτοθήρες ὑπ' ἀλλήλοισι πίνοντο
 αἷμά τε καὶ λύμφην ἀλλήλοισι κῆρα φέροντες.

¹⁵² Since water is often used in classical literature as a metaphor for the literary tradition, and ζῆλος is used by Longinus as a synonym for μίμησις, then this passage is interpretable as a metaliterary commentary of writers competing over ownership of poetic material; New vs. Old.

¹⁵³ cf. LSJ s.v. ἔχω B.II.1, “be”.

We were amazed when we passed by and saw them. The land was dry and empty, and the sun in this system was extremely distressing; it was very hot, hotter than ours and sharper too. [But our armour came well-fitted with complex chill-production systems in the clothes]. There didn't seem to be any spring of water or other kind of dew, but the land was completely dry and barren. A hot, dry wind also kept on blowing throughout it, quickly baking out the moisture from all things, including the animal-plants¹⁵⁴. In this case, as I observed, they had to draw water from one another since there was no spring of water at all. So, the ability to photosynthesise is unable to preserve their lives without tons of rivalry over water. But a new hypothesis came to me about the animal-plants and how at the base of their food pyramid [zoologists call it a 'food pyramid'] there must be beings that are really drinking this water. Otherwise, it wouldn't be possible to live in that place. We went to go search for these remarkable drinking beings so as to lead us to the source of the dark water is hidden. It didn't seem to be observable to everyone whether most of the animal-plants drink from one another, carrying blood, water, and each other's doom.

¹⁵⁴ Now the planet sounds like Arrakis from Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

Πολλὰς συμφορέας περ ἐπάθομεν εἰσορόωντες.
 πολλὰκι θηροφυτὰ περ αἷζατο αἶμα θέλοντες (90)
 σπᾶν· τοὺς μὲν δέομεν κτάμεναι φείσοισι πικροῖσι.
 Πολλὰ δ' ἐθησάμεθα ξένα πρήγματα θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἔαρ ὕδατος γ' ἠύρηκέναι οὐ μόρος ἦεν.
 Ἄπρηκτοί περ ἐνήσαμεν εἰς καλεργέα νῆα.
 Αὐριοι αὖτις ἔβημεν ἵμεν ζητήμονες ὑγρῶν (95)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ κερτόμεοις ἔπεσιν¹⁵⁵ χαίροντο ἐταῖροι.
 Εἰς τέλος ἠύρομεν ὑδροπότας οἱ πυραμίδος περ
 τῆς τροφίμης βάσις ἦσαν ἀναίτιοι θηροφονάων.
 Ἦσαν μὲν τρώγλαι τετρυπημέναι εὖ ἐνὶ χέρσῳ
 πέτρη σκληροτάτῃ τὴν σκάπτειν οὐκ ἐδυναντο (100)
 ἄλλοι θηροφυτοὶ πλὴν αὐτῶν ὑδροποτήρων.
 τῆς πέτρης ὑπενέρθεν ἔην λίμνη¹⁵⁶ πολυύδρος
 κρυπτή· καὶ ἐν τῇ ζῶον οἱ ὑδροποτήρες.
 Ἐκ τρώγλων κεφαλὰς προύχοντο καὶ οὐατα μακρὰ
 φαοτοσυντιθέντες ὑπ' αὐγῆς ἡελίοιο (105)
 ἦε καὶ ἄζωτον¹⁵⁷ πῖον οἱ ἐξ ἡέρος αὐτοῦ
 οὐκ ἄρ' ὥς φύτα δ' ἔστιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ
 ἡμετέρῃ τάδε γ' ἄζωτον πηλοῦ ἀνάφυσσαν.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ τοῖς λόχοον φυτοθήρες τοὶ ταχυγυῖοι
 ἄρπαγες οἱ τοὺς ὑδροποτάς ἀρπᾶξαι εἴωθαν. (110)
 Τοὺς μὲν ἀρπακτῆρας ἔπειτ' ἄλλοι ἄρπαζον
 μακροτέροι καὶ καρτοτέροι ὕδατος περὶ ζήλου
 ἀλλὰ γε τοὺς ἰδὲ μακροτέροι κτάνον οἱ φυτοθήρες
 οὕτως πυραμίδα τροφίμην γνῶμεν μεμαθόντες.

¹⁵⁵ cf. *Iliad* 1.539, 2.256, 4.6, 5.419; *Odyssey* 9.474, 18.350, 20.177, 24.240.

¹⁵⁶ Křesadlo has written λίμη but this doesn't work.

¹⁵⁷ Modern Greek word for 'Nitrogen'.

We endured many misfortunes whilst we were looking. Often the animal-plants sprung upon us, desiring to suck out our blood, and we had to slay them with our piercing phasers. We observed many alien things that were wonders to behold, but it was not decreed by fate that we find the source of the water. Unable to do anything, we returned to our beautifully-constructed ship. The next day we went back out searching for moisture, but our companions greeted us with mocking¹⁵⁸ words. When finally we found out that the water-drinkers that comprised the base of the food pyramid weren't to blame for animal-murder. There were holes bored well into dry, hard cliff which other animal-plants couldn't have dug, except for the water-drinkers themselves. Underneath the rock there was a hidden lake that was abounding in water, and in it lived the water-drinkers. They stuck their heads and long ears out from the holes, photosynthesising under the sun's rays and drank Nitrogen from the air itself, unlike how the plants present on our much-nourishing Earth draw Nitrogen in from the dirt. But quickly-fruited plant-animals lie in wait for them: poachers who're accustomed to snatch away the water-drinkers. Then others, larger and stronger, snatch away these poachers because of their rivalry over the water. But even they are slain by larger plant-animals. This is how we came to know the food-pyramid, having learnt from observation.

¹⁵⁸ Lit. 'heart-cutting'.

Ἀλλά γ' ἐνὶ στήθεσσι μ' ἄνωγεν θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ (115)
 φείσοισιν λυγροῖς σκάπτειν πολυδειράδα¹⁵⁹ πέτρην
 ὥστε ὕδωρ φαίνοιτο καὶ ἄλλοις θηροφυτοῖσιν
 ὥς μαθέειν γε δυναίντο πίνειν ὀρθῶς μέλαν ὕδωρ
 πάντες δ' ἐξείης καὶ ἄνευ δνοφέροιο φόνιοι.
 Αὐτίκ' ἐρυσσάμενος φεῖσρον (120)

κρατεροῦ παρὰ μηροῦ
 πέτρην σκληροοχον¹⁶⁰ δὲ διαφθερ' ἧῦτ' ὀμίχλην.
 Ἐξαῦτις βαθέωφι ῥέεν λύμφη βιοδωτήρ.
 Ἄμμες δ' αὖτις ἐνήσαμεν εἰς τὴν νῆα μέλαινα
 γηθοσύνοι ὅτι θηροφυτοῖσι δεδώκαμεν ὕδωρ
 ἡὲ τέλος ἐριδός τε φόβουτε τεθήκαμεν αὐτοῖς (125)
 εἰς αἰῶνα· τὸ γὰρ μάλα νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησα
 τῶν μὲν ἐξωτερῶν μεταβολὴν οὐχὶ δύνασθαι
 βάλλειν τὰς φύσεας μέτα καὶ ἐπανορθοῦν
 θηρῶν καὶ ἀνδρῶν. εἰ ναὶ οὐκ ἐξαπίνης δέ.
 Νῆα μὲν εὐξέστην ἐπιβήσαμεν ἡδεῖ θυμῷ (130)
 θηροφυτῶν γὰρ γηθούνοι ἀτόποισι νόοισι.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος δ' ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον πλάνην ξεῖνον λελιπόντες.
 Ἐνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν. (135)

¹⁵⁹Only used in the *Iliad* (1.499, 5.754, 8.3) of Mt Olympus.

¹⁶⁰Very obscure, the Czech suggests 'I destroyed', but I can't find any words with the consonant cluster -σκληρ-, the closest I can find in form and meaning is σκῶλος, cf. LSJ s.v. σκῶλος I.2, "evil, ruin"; perhaps σκύλλω?

But the heroic heart in my breast prompted me to dig out the cliff with the many ridges using our deadly phasers so that the water might be revealed to the other animal-plants as well, so that they could all learn how to drink the dark water correctly, one after another, without the gloomy murder. Drawing my phaser at once from the side of my powerful thigh, I destroyed the cliff and it became transparent like a mist. Life-giving water flowed from the depths immediately. So, we returned back to our black ship, joyful that we had given water to the animal-plants and put an end to their strife and fear forever. But I, fool that I am, didn't recognise that a change in external conditions isn't able to alter the inner nature of animals and men after it's already been changed, certainly not instantaneously. We boarded the well-polished ship in high spirits, because we were joyful for the animal-plants in our paradoxical minds. The rocket propelled the beautifully-constructed ship at once, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind us. From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

Book E*[Τὰ περὶ τῶν δυσγενέων]*

Πλάνητην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
[Μανδὸν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν]
 τῷ τοι ζῶα γ' ἔναιε περισσά τε θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι
 ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπὶ χθονίοις μὲν εἰκότα μορφήν
 εἶδει ἐξοτέρῳ ἀλλ' ἀλλόκοτ' ἔνδον ἔοντα. (5)
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ζαπέδῳ ἔχομεν καλεργέα νῆα
 οὐρανόθεν πτάμενοι καὶ ἔστημεν καταβάντες
 πρὸς δ' ἡμᾶς ἦλθον πολλοὶ ἐπιχώριοι ἄνδρες
 νῆά γε καὶ αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς σκοπέειν ἐθέλοντες.
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' αὐτοτόποι μνήσαντ' ἄνδρεςσιν ὄλεθρον (10)
 γηγενέσιν· ῥά φιλόξεينوι ἡμῖν ἐφάνεσκον
 ἀστεῖοίς γε λόγοις ἅμμ' ἀσπάζοντ' ἐνὶ χώρῃ
(Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων μετεθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα)
 πρόφρονες καὶ ἦγοντο ἐϋκτιμένηνδε πόλινδε
 εἰς αὐτῶν βασιλῆα φίλον καὶ ὄνδε δόμονδε. (15)
 Βῆμεν ἴμεν ποτὶ ἄστρ' σὺν ἀνδράσι αὐτοτόποισιν
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἄνευ ὅπλων· ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν.

Book 5

[The events concerning the degenerates]

And then we arrived at a planet after swimming amongst the stars [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe], and on it there lived strange beings that were a wonder to behold: in form they resembled the outward appearance of Earthly humans, but were completely different on the inside. But when we moored the beautifully-constructed ship, after flying to the ground from the sky, we disembarked and stood there. Many native men came to us, wanting to examine both us and our ship. The locals didn't have destruction in mind for us earthborn men, instead, they seemed friendly to us, and gave us a kind welcome in their land with polite words (Franta, our universal translator, translated their words for us), and eagerly led us to their city with its fair buildings, to their dear king and to his palace. We went along with the natives to their city, but not without weapons, as experience had taught us.

- Πάντες γὰρ ἔχομεν κάπησιν ἀμύμονα ὄπλα
οἷά τε συγγραφέες σαῖ-φαῖ *φείσρους* καλέουσιν
ἦγον εἰς μέγαρονδ' εὐτυκτον σιγαλοές τε (20)
τῷ μὲν σφῶν βασιλεὺς ἦρως ἐδραῖος ἔσκεν
ἐν θρόνῳ ἀργυρέῳ· περὶ πολλοὶ ἔσαν θεράποντες
ἄνδρες ἡὲ γυναῖκες· ὃδ' ἔζετο κύδεϊ γαίῳ¹⁶¹.
Τὸν μὲν Ῥξ-Φρξ-Πρξ σφετέρῃ γλωσση καλέοντο
ἀλλοδαπῇ ἡμῖν δὲ γελώιον οὔνομά γ' ἦεν. (25)
Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ'¹⁶² αἰδῶα' γ' ἐδείξαμεν ἀνδρὶ ἄνακτι
ἡμᾶς Ῥξ-Φρξ-Πρξ προέφη πτεροέσσιν ἔπεσσιν
(αὐτὰρ *Φράντα μεταφφίζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα*)
«ἽΩ ξεῖνοι τινές ἐστε; πόθεν ζακενὸν¹⁶³ πλέτε κόσμον;
ἦ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἦ μαψιδίως ἀλάλησθε¹⁶⁴ (30)
οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ἐπ' ἀστέρας ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέραντες.»
ἽΩ φάτο· τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ περ ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπον·
«Οὐδὲ γέ τοι βασιλεῦ ἄνομοι ληστήρεές ἐσμεν
ἀλλὰ φυλακτῆρες πόλεος ἀπονόσφιν ἐούσης (35)
πλανήτῃ ξείνῳ τὸν Γαίην κικλήσκουσιν.
Καὶ τέιην¹⁶⁵ γε πόλιν ἰδὲ πλανήτην ἐπίβημεν
ἄνερα ζητοῦντες χαλεπὸν φυζάνορα φῶρα.
Ἄρχοντες πέμψαν καὶ μοι κρατερῶς ἐπίτελλον
μή ποτε νοστήσαι πρὶν κλέπτῃν φῶτα λάβεσθαι. (40)

¹⁶¹ cf. *Iliad* 1.405, 5.906, 8.51, 11.81 (Zeus is usually the object of exultation).

¹⁶² Křesadlo has written ἔπειτ' but this seems like a mistake given his common use of αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα (cf. *Astr.* 1.37, 1.150, 1.209, 2.60, etc.).

¹⁶³ = διάκενος (δια/ζα).

¹⁶⁴ Křesadlo has clearly written ἀλάσθε, but lines 30-2 are otherwise identical to *Astr.* 2.134-6, which has ἀλάλησθε instead.

¹⁶⁵ = τεός, ἦ, ὄν (Dor./Epic form of σός).

For we had many excellent weapons in our pockets, the kind sci-fi writers call 'phasers'. They led us into a hall that was well-made and glistening, in which their king, the hero, was sitting on a silver throne, and around him were many servants, both men and women. He sat, exulting in his glory. In their own alien language he was called Rx-Frx-Prx, but we found the name laughable. But when we displayed our respect to the lord, Rx-Frx-Prx addressed us in winged words (but Franta our translator translated his words for us).

"O aliens, who are you? Where in the empty cosmos have you sailed from? Are you wandering through the stars here and there in pursuit of some goal or just recklessly like pirates, staking your souls by bringing misfortune to strangers?"

So he spoke, and I said in reply to him:

"We aren't lawless pirates, king, but the guardians of a city that's on an alien planet far away that they call the Earth. And we have landed on your city and planet in search of a dangerous man, a thief in flight. Our rulers sent us on our way and gave me strict commands never to return home until the thief is caught.

Ἡμεῖς πλανήτας πάντας τοὶ ἀῆρά γ' ἔχουσιν
 ἢ πάντως ὥς Γῆ γε καταστάσεάς τοι ὁμοίας
 πλοῦμεν ἐπερχόμενοι οὕς περ κίχεμεν¹⁶⁶ κράτος εἶη
 δύσθυμοι¹⁶⁷. Ναὶ γὰρ πολὺ φέρτερον ἢ καὶ ἀρεῖον¹⁶⁸
 κουφοιέρον τ' εἶη ζητεῖν ῥαφὶν εὐραπτῆρα (45)

σμικρὴν εἰν κάρφης σωρεύματι χάρματι πώλων
 ἀλλ' οὐ δὴν τις προῆξις ἐστ' ἄμμιν δυσμενέεσσι.
 Καί τοι πλανήτην νῦν ἐβήσαμεν ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ
 φῶρα δ' ἔφῶτα διωκόμενοι βάθεσιν ζακενοῖο¹⁶⁹
 ὥς τοι ἔνεστιν ἀήρ τε ὕδωρ ἰδὲ ἡέλιός τε (50)

ὥς ἐπὶ Γῆ· τῷ γὰρ θέλομεν καὶ ἔχειν ἀνάπανμα
 ἀστερονατάων στασεός τοι ἄνευ βαρυτῆτος.
 Ἀλλ' ἄνα Ρξ-Φρξ-Πρξ ἐλέαιρέ τε ξινοδόκευε
 ἄνδρας¹⁷⁰ δυστήνους· ἵκεται δέ τοι εὐχόμεθ' εἶναι.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην· ὁ μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα. (55)

Ἀλλὰ τε Ρξ-Φρξ-Πρξ βασιλεὺς ἡδὺν φάνε θυμόν.
 Ἄμμιν εὐ φρονέων ἀσπάζετο ἢ ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 καὶ πρόφρων αἵτησε ξένους αὐτοῖο ἔσσεσθαι
 καὶ μενέειν ἐν εἰδοῖσιν ἐϋκτιμένοισι δόμοισιν
 ὥς δὴν ῥ' ὥς ἡμᾶς περ ἄνωγεν θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ. (60)
 Ἡμεῖς γηθοσύνοι δὲ χάριν σχόμεν¹⁷¹ ἀνδρὶ ἄνακτι.

¹⁶⁶ = κιχάνειν.

¹⁶⁷ The sense of this whole clause is a little obscure, the Czech translates it as “as far as we can reach them”, but κιχάνω isn't really used to mean ‘reach’ in the *Odyssey*, it's much more often used to describe finding or encountering someone or something, like τύγχανω.

¹⁶⁸ Comparative of ἄρος.

¹⁶⁹ = διακενοῖο (δια/ζα).

¹⁷⁰ Křesadlo writes ἄνδα, but this seems like a spelling mistake.

¹⁷¹ = ἔσχομεν (aor. 1st pl. indic. act. of ἔχω).

Disheartened, we are sailing to all the planets that have an atmosphere and all the conditions similar to the Earth, traversing those that power allows us to find. Because it's much better, more helpful, and easier to search for a small needle that makes excellent stitches in a haystack that delights young horses, but even so, there's been no solution for us in our misfortune¹⁷². And now we have landed on your planet with grief in our hearts, chasing the thief through the depths of the void, since you have an atmosphere and water and a sun, as on the Earth. For we also wanted to have a rest on it, without the weighty strife that those who sail amongst the stars face. But lord Rx-Frx-Prx, take pity on us and receive us as guests, wretched men that we are. We pray to be your suppliants."

So I spoke, and our translator translated my words, but at least king Rx-Frx-Prx revealed his welcoming disposition. He graciously welcomed us in his land and eagerly asked us to be his guests and to stay in his well-built palace as long as our heroic hearts bid us. We rejoiced and thanked this lord.

¹⁷² The literal translation is 'us in our hostility', but this doesn't really make much sense in context; the Czech offers 'unfortunate', taking δυσμενέεσσι as something more like δυσδαμόνεσσι.

πέμφε δὲ βαλνεῖον¹⁷³ δὲ ἀποπνεῦσαι δέ τε λοῦσαι
 σώματα καὶ κεφαλὰς· τόδε νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησα
 οὐκ ἄρα τις ἐτάρων ὅτι πηγὴ πῆματος ἦεν.
 Ἦλθομεν εἰς βαλανεῖα καὶ εἰς θερμὴν κολυβήθρην¹⁷⁴ (65)
 γυμνοὶ ὥς ἐπέοικε λίπουτες εἵματα πάντα
 ἔξω εἰν βάθοις· αὐτοὶ δέ τε θερμὰ λοετρὰ
 εἰσειληλύθαμεν¹⁷⁵ καὶ νήχομεν ἡδέϊ θυμῷ.
 Ἀλλὰ τε οἱ βαλανεῖς γε τεθήπασαν¹⁷⁶ ἥύτε μωροί.
 Οὐδὲ τε τοῦτο μὲν αὐτ' ἡμῖν σήμαινεν ἀγῶνα· (70)
 πολλάκι δ' ἀνδροφίλους ἴδμεν ἔμεναι βαλανῆας.
 Αὐτίκα τις τούτων ἅπο δ' ἔδραμε νόστησέν τε
 ἀνδροῖν σύν γε δυοῖν περ ἱητρῶν εἶδος ἔχοντοιν.
 Τὼ μὲν ἐπισταμένω γ' ἐπὶ χεῖλεϊ τῆς κολυβήθρης
 ἄμμε θεησαμένω ἀλλήλοιν ἡγορευήτην¹⁷⁷ (75)
 οὐδὲ τ' ἐπίστασθαι δύναμιν σχόμεν¹⁷⁸ οἷσι λόγοισι
 οὔνεκα τὸν Φράντην λίπομεν σὺν εἵμασιν ἔξω.
 Ἔσκε δὲ τεχνόμενος γαλεῆ γε κακῶδει εἰκῶς
 ἦν Μέμφιτιν μέφιτιν μὲν ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέουσι
 ζωολόγοι ἀτὰρ οἱ κοινοὶ σκουῆγον καλέουσιν (80)
 τῇ γὰρ εἰκῶς Φράντα βαφήν τινα οὐκ ἐφίλησε.

¹⁷³ = modern Greek word for 'bathhouse', βαλνεῖον.

¹⁷⁴ = modern Greek word for 'swimming pool', κολυμβήθρα.

¹⁷⁵ = εἰσέρχομαι.

¹⁷⁶ cf. *Iliad* 4.243, 4.246, 9.193, 11.545, 11.777, 16.806, 21.29, 21.64, 23.101, 24.360; *Odyssey* 6.166, 6.168, 16.12, 23.105, 24.392.

¹⁷⁷ = ἀγορεύω.

¹⁷⁸ = ἔσχομεν (aor. 1st pl. indic. act. of ἔχω).

He sent us to a bathhouse, to have a breather and wash our bodies and heads. which is why I – fool that I am – didn't recognise, nor did any of my companions, that it was a source of misery. We entered the bathhouse and the warm swimming pool, naked, as was proper, leaving all our clothes on the benches outside. We got into the warm bath ourselves and swam in high spirits. But the bath-attendants were lost in wonder like idiots. This didn't signify any trouble to us, since we've often observed that men-lovers are present at the bathhouses. One of them suddenly ran away and returned with two men that had the appearance of doctors. The two of them, standing by the rim of the swimming-pool, spoke to one another while gazing at us. But we weren't able to understand the sorts of things they were saying, because we left Franta outside with our clothes. He was constructed to resemble the foul-smelling weasel which zoologists refer to by the name 'Mephistis mephitis',¹⁷⁹ but ordinary people call it a 'skunk', because Franta, who resembled this creature, had no love for bathing at all.

¹⁷⁹ i.e., the striped skunk.

Αὐτὰρ μὲν τῷ ἄνδρῃ δύω λουτροῦ¹⁸⁰ ἐπὶ χεῖλει
 ἄνδρας νηχομένους προσεφήτην ξεῖνα φονοῦν¹⁸¹ τε
 αὐτίκ' ἐγὼ ἓνα τῶν ἐτάρων αὐληνδ' ἀπόπεψα
 ἠνέγκειν Φράντην πάσων μεταθήτορα γλώσσων. (85)

Ὅς μὲν ἀνάϊζας τάχα δ' ἔδραμε νόστησέν τε
 Φράντην χερσὶ φέρων· τὸν μὲν θῆκεν ἐπὶ χεῖλει
 αὐτὰρ νηζάμενος μὲν ἐγὼ ἦλθου κατὰ ἄκρην
 καὶ ἀνὴρ ξένος ἱητῆρ ἔπεσιν ποσέειπεν
[Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρίζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα] (90)

«Χαῖρε ξεῖνε πάτερ πλοίαρχε σὺ ἡ δ' ἐταῖροι.
 Νῶϊ μὲν ἱητῆρε ῥ' ἀγαυνοῦ Ρξ-Φρξ-Πρξ-ὄς
 ἐστόν· νῶϊν ἔτελλεν ἄναξ καὶ κοίραμος ἀνδρῶν
 Ρξ-Φρξ-Πρξ ὑμᾶς σκοπέειν εἰ ὕμμες ἀσκηθεῖς
 καὶ ὕγιεῖς ἀφίκεσθε ἐπὶ πτόλει ἡ δὲ δόμῳ τε (95)

οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγέ τί φημι κακωτέρου ἔμμεναι ἄλλο
 κόσμοιο γλαφυροῖο καὶ ἄλκιμον ἄνδρα κακούργειν.
 Ἀλλὰ σὺ καὶ ἔταροι ἐπίβητ' ἄκρην κολυβήθης
 ὥς μὲν ἔγωγε τ' ἐπισκοπέειν φύσεας ἐδυναίμην
 καὶ ἔταρος, ὥς νῶϊν ἄναξ αὐτὸς ἐπίτελλεν.» (100)

ἽΩφάτο· Φράντα μεταφρίζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα
 φωνῇ ἅλῃς μεγάλη καὶ πάντες ῥήματ' ἄκουον.
 ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἵτυν λίμας¹⁸² ἐπίβησαν
 οἱ ἔταροι καὶ ἐγὼν πεπιθόντες τοῖν θεράποντοιν.

¹⁸⁰ Křesadlo has written λουθροῦ, but this doesn't work, he must have meant to write λουτροῦ.

¹⁸¹ = φωνοῦν.

¹⁸² = λίμνη.

But the two men at the edge of the bath spoke to us as we were swimming, saying alien things. I immediately sent one of my companions to the courtyard to fetch Franta, the translator of all languages. Who, after leaping up, quickly ran and returned carrying Franta in his hands. He set him down on the ledge, then I came to the farthest edge after swimming, and an alien doctor addressed me [Franta, our universal translator, translated the words for me].

“Greetings, alien, father, ship-captain, you as well as your companions. We are both noble Rx-Frx-Prx’s doctors, and Rx-Frx-Prx, lord and ruler of men, sent us both to examine you to see whether you arrived in his city and palace unharmed and in good health, because I say that there is nothing worse than an empty cosmos and that a strong man do evil. But climb now, you and your companions, onto the edge of the swimming-pool, so that my companion and I can examine your nature as our ruler himself ordered us to do.”

So he spoke, and Franta, our translator, translated his words in a sufficiently powerful voice and we all heard the words. Then all the rest climbed up onto the rim of the pool, including my companions and I, having trusted the doctors.

- Μοῦνος ἰητὴρ πλοίοιο περ ἡμετέροιο (105)
πολλὰ κατηρᾶτο φρεσὶ πικρῇσιν μελάνησιν
τοῖν γὰρ ἰητροῖν ἄμφοιν θέλεν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον
οὐνεκ' ἀτιμήσαν τέ γ' ἰητῆρα κλυτοτέχνην
αὐτὼ περ σκοπέειν θελέτην καὶ ἐξετάλειν¹⁸³ τε.
Μακρὰ βόων ἡρᾶτο· ἐγὼ Φράντη δ' ἐπίτελλον (110)
μή τι μεταφύζειν τούτων ἀνδροῖν θεραπόντοιν
καὶ τάχα μειλίχιοις ἔπεσιν μιν ἦτορ ἔθελξα¹⁸⁴.
Τὼ μὲν ἄνδρε δύω σκοπεησαάτην κατὰ κόσμον
πάντας ἐξεῖης σὺν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἰητῆρι.
Σφῶϊ προσευδήτην¹⁸⁵ ἔπεα πτεροέντα τὰ πολλὰ (115)
ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γλώσση τῇδ' εἴωθαν ἀγορευεῖν
πάντες ἐν πλάνῃ· εἶχον δ' ἰδίωμα παλαιὸν
κρυπτόν τῳ γε σοφοὶ μοῦνοι λέγον ἀλλήλοισιν
ὥς μὲν ἐν Γαίῃ πρότεροι γλώσση Ῥωμαίῃ
ἀλλὰ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα, (120)
λάθρα τε ἡσυχίῃ φωνῇ ὧς οἱ ἐπίτελλον·

¹⁸³ Obscure, possibly from ἐκταλαντόω (ταλαντεύω) 'weigh out' i.e., 'ponder, consider, reflect upon' their health like the Latin *pondero*? The Czech offers 'to investigate our state of health'.

¹⁸⁴ Seems modelled on *Odyssey* 18.282-3 (of Penelope): **θέλγε δὲ θυμὸν // μειλιχίοις ἐπέεσσιν**, νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα ('*she beguiled their souls with winning words, but her mind was set on other things*') [trans. Murray 1919, Loeb 105]); θέλγω is connected to casting spells or enchanting, but also having an effect on someone due to one's charming personality.

¹⁸⁵ Obscure, the Czech offers 'they spoke'.

The only doctor on our ship called down many curses on us with his dark and spiteful mind, for he wished utter destruction on both the doctors because they had slighted him as a doctor who is famous for his skill by them both wanting to examine and ponder upon our health. He cursed, loudly shouting, and I ordered Franta not to translate any of it to the two doctors and I quickly charmed his heart with gentle words. The two men examined us all properly, one after another, including me and the doctor. They discussed many things with each other in lofty words, but not in the language that everyone on this planet was accustomed to make conversation. They had an ancient secret dialect, which only the scholars spoke to each other in, like in the Latin language on Earth in former times, but Franta our translator translated everything for us, secretly and with a quiet voice since I ordered him.

«Οὐκ ἀρετᾷ κακὰ ἔργα¹⁸⁶ περὶ κτίσεως πέλει ἀνδρῶν
 τῶνδε·¹⁸⁷ ἐπεὶ μέγαλοι καὶ εὖμορφοι κατὰ κόσμον
 μηροῦς καὶ κνήμας στιβαρὰς δέ τε χεῖρας ἕκαστος
 ὀρθὸν καὶ νῶτον καὶ αὐχένα ἤε καὶ ὄμοιον (125)
 εὐροῖν καὶ στῆθος σθεναρόν. μέγα χάρμα ἰδεσθαι
 πρόσωπον μὲν ἐϋκτίμενον στόμα καὶ ἰδὲ ῥῖνα
 ἄμφοιν ὀφθαλμοῖν καὶ οὐατα· καλὸς ἕκαστος.

Πάντες πέντανδρές εἰσιν χερσὶν τε πόδεσσιν
 ἢ καὶ ἐϋκτίμενοι ἄνδρες οὐκ ἀνδρόγυνοί τε. (130)

Τούτων μὲν δέομεν γενεὴν ἐὺ ἐξορθοῦναι,
 ἡμετέρην· θεὸς αὐτὸς ἔπεμψεν οὐρανόθεν γάρ.»
 Ὡς τῶν μὲν ἔπεσιν περ ἀμειβέσθην πτεροίσσιν
 γλώσση δ' ἀρχαίη τὴν οὔτις ἐπίστατο ἀνδρῶν
 κοινοτέρων πλάνη πλὴν αὐτῶν τῶν σοφομωρῶν (135)
 ἀλλὰ Φράντα μεταφίζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα.

Μοὶ μὲν λισσομένῳ γε κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 ὥς οἱ μὲν φανερώς ἔθελον πλανήτη ἐρύκειν
 ὥσπερ δεσμώτας καὶ ὀχευτήρας τε γυναικῶν
 ἐξορθοῦν γενεὴν τεκέειν δέ τε φέρτερα τέκνα. (140)

¹⁸⁶ cf. *Odyssey* 8.329-32 of Ares caught in Hephaestus' net: οὐκ ἀρετᾷ κακὰ ἔργα· κιχάνει τοι βραδὺς ὠκύν, // ὥς καὶ νῦν Ἥφαιστος ἐὼν βραδὺς εἶλεν Ἄρηα // ὠκύτατόν περ ἐόντα θεῶν οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν, // χωλὸς ἐὼν τέχνῃσι· τὸ καὶ μοιχάγρι' ὀφέλλει. (*“III deeds do not win out. The slow catches the swift; just as now Hephaestus, slow as he is, has caught Ares even though he is the swiftest of the gods who hold Olympus. Lamé, he has caught him by craft. Ares must pay for his adultery”* [trans. Murray 1919, Loeb 104]).

¹⁸⁷ The meaning of the whole clause is a little obscure.

“The wicked deeds that concern the creation of men such as these don’t prosper, since they are mighty and well-formed, as is proper for thighs, shanks, and each sturdy hand; straight-backed and straight-necked, and the shoulders are broad too, and mighty-chested. It’s a great pleasure to behold their well-constructed faces, mouths, and noses, as well as both their eyes and ears – each one is beautiful. They’ve all got the strength of five men in their hands and feet, these men are well-built, not effeminate. We need these to successfully improve our race, for god himself has sent them to us from heaven.”

So they conversed amongst themselves in winged words, and in the ancient language which none of the common people on this planet except for the wise fools themselves knew, but Franta, our translator, translated everything for us. My dear heart shattered at the entreaty, since they obviously wanted to confine us to their planet so that we’d be their prisoners and improve their race after their women have had sex with us by producing better children.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Eugenics; the verb ὀχεύω refers to the copulation of animals, not people, here it animalises Oudeis and his crew (cf. LSJ s.v. ὀχεύω II.2). Men being forced to copulate (the so-called *Breeding Slave/Baby Factory* trope) is often played for humour in sci-fi (e.g., *Futurama* Season 3 Episode 1, “*Amazon Women in the Mood*”); a classical analogue would be Apollodorus 2.4.10, when Heracles is tricked into impregnating 50 women (cf. also Pausanias 9.27.6-7).

Ταῦτά γε πάντα δέ μοι εἶπεν Φράντης μεταφρήζων
 λάθρα τε ἡσυχίῃ φωνῇ ὥς οἱ ἐπίτελλον
 τῶν δ' ἄλλων ἀνδρῶν ἐτάρων οὔτις γὰρ ἄκουσεν
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ τοῖσιν γ' οὐκ εἶπα ἀχνύμενός περ
 εἰ μὴ κεν στήσιν πειράζοντές γ' ἀπόλοντο (145)
 γυμνοὶ τ' ἄνοπλοι· τάδε γ' ἡσυχίην μὲν ὄφελλεν.
 Αὐτὰρ ἰήτρε δύω προσεφωνήτην ἐπέεσαν
 ἧ καὶ ἀνωγήτην ζηραίνεσθαι ῥακέεσσι
 εἵματά τ' ἐνδύναι τ' ἵμεναι μακρόνδε δόμονδε
 τοῦ κοράμου πίνειν καὶ ἀμύμονα δαῖτα δάσασθαι. (150)
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ἔσθητα ἔλων ἔθελόν ἐ δύσεσθαι
 φείσρον ἐν κάψῃσ' οὐκ εἶχον αἵτινες ἦσαν
 αὐτίκα δ' αὖτ' ἔταροί μοι ὅμοιον πρῆγμα ἔειπον.
 Τοὺς δ' ἄμμες κοτέοντες ἐρωτῶμεν περὶ φείσρων
 οἳ μὲν ἀμειβόμενοι μείδησαν δ' ἄμμι τ' εἶπον (155)
 ἔκ φείσρους μὲν ἐνεγκέμεναι σάφα τοὺς κατέχεσθαι
 μὴ τις κλεψείῃ· τε πάλιν δόμεναι δέ τ' ἐξαῦτις
 ὅπποτέ κεν λείψῃ ναῦς πλανήτην πολυδῆμον
 ψευδόμενοι¹⁸⁹· ἡμῖν δὲ κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μυρομένοισιν. (160)
 Βῆμεν ἵμεν δ' ἀκέων καὶ ἀμηχανίῃ ἔχε θυμόν.
 Ἦμος μὲν βασιλῆά τ' ἀφικόμεθ' ἧ μεγαρόν τε
 ἡμεῖς ἐξόμενοι δάσαμεν κρέα καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ.

¹⁸⁹ The middle of ψεύδω is used with active sense in Homer, cf. *Iliad* 5.635, 6.163, 7.352, 10.534, *Odyssey* 4.140, 14.125, 14.365.

Our translator, Franta, told us everything about this, secretly and with a quiet voice since I ordered him, since none of my other companions overheard it, and, even though I was troubled, I didn't tell them, lest they perish by attempting a revolution, naked and unarmed – this must be kept quiet. But the two doctors spoke with us and advised us to dry ourselves with rags, and to put on our clothes and come to the large palace, so that we could drink with their ruler and dine on an excellent feast. But then when I wanted to put on the clothes I'd taken, there weren't any of the phasers I had in the pockets, and my companions immediately told me the same issue. We questioned them angrily about the phasers, and they smiled at us and said in reply that they had removed the phasers and have safely confined them so that no one might steal them, and that they would give them back to us again once our ship has left behind their populous planet – all lies! Our dear hearts shattered, and no solution revealed itself to us as we wept. We went to leave in silence and our hearts felt helpless. And once we had arrived at the king and his great hall, we dined on meat and sweet wine after we'd sat down.

- Σκλήηροι μὲν φῶτες τετυκώμεθ' ἐπιστάμενοί τε
 παμπόλλων πολέμων· ἔμπειροι καὶ ἐτ' ἀγώνων (165)
 κοσμιακῶν· οὐκ αὖ γε τύχη τις γάστερα εἴλοι.¹⁹⁰
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐπεὶ βρώμης μὲν ὀνήσαμεν¹⁹¹ ἢ ποτῆτος
 τοῖσιν ἀνιστάμενος μετέφη βασιλεὺς πολύμητις.
 «Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων¹⁹² ξεῖνοι φίλοι ὄφρα τε εἴπω·
 ὑμᾶς μὲν πεμφθέντας ἐκείδε θεοῖσιν ὄϊω (170)
 ὥς ὑμεῖς μάλα ἐστὲ καλοὶ καὶ ἐνκτίμενοί τε
 ἡμεῖς δυσγενέες δέ τ' ἀεικέλιοί τε κακοὶ τε
 οὐδ' ἄρα μὲν φανερώς τλήμεν ἵεναι κατὰ ἄστυ
 ὥς ἐσμεν φύσεως· ἀλλ' εὐσκεναζόμενοι περ
 πάντεσσιν κρύψεσσι κεκρυμμένοι ἀλλήλοισιν (175)
 αἰσχύνῃ· μάλα δύσμορφοί τοι ἐσμεν ἅπαντες.
 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαίτιοι ἐσμεν ἐπεὶ εἰσιν προπάτωρες
 οἶδε παρήλθοντος καὶ ἀρχαίοιο αἰῶνος
 βόμβην μὲν κτῖσάν γε πυρηνιακὴν ἐϋτυκτον
 ἄνερας ὀλλύμεναι καὶ ἄστεα ἢ περ ἅπαντα (180)
 σμερδαλέως· μία βόμβη γ' ὄλεσεν μέγα ἄστυ.
 τῇσιν μὲν προπάτωρες ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἔβαλλον.

¹⁹⁰ Hunger is a theme of Odysseus' travels, cf. *Odyssey* 12.327-43 (cf. especially 12.340, κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων, which is exactly how King Rx-Frx-Prx opens his upcoming speech at line 169).

¹⁹¹ = cf. LSJ s.v. ὀνίνημι II.1.

¹⁹² cf. *Odyssey* 10.189, 12.271, 12.340 (noted above) (n.b., the first two examples are delivered by Odysseus, the third is by one of his companions trying to convince the rest to eat Hyperion's oxen).

We've been fortified into hard men,¹⁹³ familiar with all kinds of conflict, and experienced in cosmic battles – no fate could ruin our appetites. But while we were enjoying the food and drink, their crafty¹⁹⁴ king stood up and spoke amongst his people.

“Hear my words, dear aliens, and what I have to say: I think that you’ve been sent here by the gods, since you’re very beautiful and well-built, but we’re degenerates, ugly and foul. I can’t bear going through the city as nature made us for all to see. But we’re well-dressed, hiding ourselves out of shame from one another with all kinds of methods of concealment, since all of us are severely deformed. But we’re not the ones to blame, that would be our ancestors, who in the course of an ancient bygone era brought the well-constructed nuclear bomb into existence to destroy men, cities, and everything in a terror-inducing way.¹⁹⁵ A single bomb destroyed a great city. Our ancestors launched these upon one another.

¹⁹³ τεύχω here means ‘we were’, but I have translated it as ‘we’ve been fortified into’ because I wanted to capture the dual meaning of τεύχω also signifying artificial construction (the perfect middle participle is even used to mean ‘well-made/-wrought’, cf. LSJ s.v. τεύχω I.2).

¹⁹⁴ Epithet of Odysseus, e.g., *Odyssey* 2.173, 4.763, 5.214, 7.207, 8.165, 9.1, 11.354, 13.311, 14.191 etc.

¹⁹⁵ The deformity of the ‘degenerates’ is the result of a nuclear war/cold war. See ‘mutants’ in the *Fallout* game franchise.

Πάσῃν μὲν χώραν ὄλεσάν τε διέφθαρκάν τε
 θηρία καὶ βοτάνην καὶ ἄσπεα πουλυδομεῖα
 ἄνδρας θηλείας καὶ παῖδας ἢ γέροντας (185)
 πάσας μὲν τέχνας τε σοφίην ἢ μάθημα.

Παῖδοι δ' ἄνθρωποι γ' ἐνταῦθα βίον ἐσάωσαν
 τρώγλῃσιν δνοφέρῃσι κεκρυμμένοι ἢ γ' ἰδὲ θῆρες
 οἰκεῖοι ὥς βοῦς αἶγες οἰῆς τε καὶ ἵπποι
 καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ δ' αἵλουροι καὶ κύνες ἀργοί. (190)
 Ἀλλ' ὥς μὲν ῥ' ἀνέδυσαν¹⁹⁶ ὑπαὶ φάος ἡελίοιο
 αὐτίκα σφας αὐγαὶ λυγραὶ ἤρχον κατά βάλλειν
 τὰς μὲν ῥῆδιενεργείας καλέουσι σοφισταί.

Ταῖδε διέφθαρκαν τούτων χρομοσώματα πάντα
 καὶ γε μεταλλάξας μαμπόλλας αἰτιόωσαν (195)
 ἀνδράσι ἢ γυναιξὶ καὶ ἄλλοις θηρέσι πᾶσιν
 ἢ φυτοῖς· μοῦνον τεράτων γε πανοπτικὸν ἦεν.
 Ταῦτά γε πάντα γέγοντο δ' ἐν ἀρχαῖοις ἐνιαυτοῖς.

Ῥηδιενεργεῖται δ' αὐγαὶ οὐ πλεῖν τρυπανῶσιν
 ἀλλὰ γε ἡ γενεὴ δυσμόρφη βεβλαμένη τε. (200)
 Ὑμεῖς δ' αὖτε καλοὶ ἄνδρες περ ἐϋκτίμενοί τε
 ἡῦδες καὶ μεγάλοι εὖμορφοι χάρμα ἴδεσθαι
 ἢ τ' ἀγάλματά ἐστι παλαιὰ πυρηνιακῶν πρὶν¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹⁶ cf. Cunliffe Homer s.v. ἀναδύω 1., usually of emerging from the sea or waves.

¹⁹⁷ Open to meta-poetic reading on New vs. Old, the older (and more epic) is preferred; cf. *Astr.* 1.203-4, 3.197, 4.77-8; there's also significance in the choice of *agalma* over *eikon* (εἰκών), since an *agalma* is not only a statue, it's something that *appeals* or *delights*; the comparison of people to statues is also often used in late antique literature as a way of evoking the classical (or in this case, Homeric) model, frozen into an imperishable form (ironic to say here given the fact that the *agalmata* no longer exist); cf. especially *Astr.* 2.289.

They destroyed the whole land and corrupted the animals, the plants, and the many-homed cities, men, women, children and the elderly, all skill, wisdom, and knowledge. A few men managed to preserve their lives at that time by hiding themselves away in dark tunnels, as well as animals such as domestic cows, goats, sheep, horses, and many other things, such as cats and fast hounds. But when they came back up beneath the sun's light, deadly rays immediately began to strike them down, which the scientists called 'radioactive'. These corrupted all their chromosomes and caused many mutations in men, women, and all other kinds of animals, as well as plants. It was entirely a cabinet of curiosities¹⁹⁸. All these things happened in ancient times. The radioactive rays aren't numerous enough to pierce us, but are race is deformed and disabled. But you, on the other hand, are beautiful and well-built, excellent and mighty, well-formed, and a delight to behold, like the ancient statues that existed before nuclear things.

¹⁹⁸ Lit. 'a panopticon of monsters', here a 'panopticon' means "a public exhibition hall or showroom" (OED s.v. panopticon 3).

- Τοῦνεκα λισσόμενος ὑμῶν εὖτυκτα κάρηνα
 γούνουμαι ἐπέεσσι μένειν λαόν τε σαῶσαι (205)
 καὶ τὰς θυγατέρας γῆμαι ἀνδρῶν οἱ ἄριστοι
 ἡμετέρῃ χώρῃ πολὺ καρτεροὶ ἀφνειοὶ τε
 καὶ τεκέειν κλυτὰ τέκνα ἀμύμονα χάρμα ἰδεσθαι.
 Ὑμῖν μὲν δύνάμεις γ' ἔσται ὄλβος τε τιμὴ τε
 ἡμετέρῃ γαίῃ ὡς ἀνδράσι ἡγεμόνευσιν¹⁹⁹ (210)
 ἐρχομένους κατὰ ἄστυ θεοὺς ὡς εἰσόψονται.
 Εἴ κέν μή δ' ἐθέλοιτε μένειν θυμῷ ἀέκοντι
 ὑμμε βίηφιν ἐρύσσαι ἀναγκάζεσθαι οἴῳ.
 Καῖρος μὲν μέγας ἐστὶ γάμων ἐσθλῶν δέ τ' ἀφορμή.
 οὐδ' ἄρα τοὺς ἐθέλοιμί γ' ἐμῆς χειρὸς διαφῶσαι.» (215)
 Ὡς φάτο· Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.
 Ὑμῖν λισσομένοισι κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 ὥστε βιασθεῖσιν γῆμαι κούρας τερατώδεις
 λάθρα περ ἀχνύμενοι δέ τ' ἐπεύχεσθαι μεμάαμεν.
 Εἴ κέν τις ζῶη θεὸς εἰν κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν²⁰⁰ (220)
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο εὐχομένοισιν.
 Ἐζόμενοι ἀκέων δὲ ποτάζομεν αἶθοπα οἶνον²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁹ = ἡγεμονοῦσιν.

²⁰⁰ Protasis of a 'vivid future' conditional (εἰ + ἄν + subj., 'if **by chance**...'), we'd expect the apodosis to be in the future or aorist tense, but we are surprised with an imperfect indicative, a 'past general' conditional ('**but no solution would**...').

²⁰¹ Commonly used in Homer, cf. *Iliad* 1.462, 4.259, 5.341, 6.266, 11.775 etc., *Odyssey* 2.57, 3.359, 7.295, 9.360, 12.19, 13.8 etc.

Therefore, praying to your well-made heads, with my words I implore you to stay and save my people, and marry the daughters of the men in my land who are noble, very powerful, and wealthy, and to bear them children that are noble and illustrious, joys to behold. Power and happiness shall be yours, as well as high esteem in our land like men that are leaders, they'll look upon you as you go throughout the city like they'd look upon the gods. If you might not perhaps wish to stay here with an unwilling heart, then I suppose we will have to detain you by force. It's very much the right time and pretext for prosperous marriages, and I wouldn't want them to escape my grasp!"

So he spoke, and our translator Franta translated his words. Our dear hearts shattered at his entreaties, that we're being forced to marry monstrous maidens. We grieved in secret and tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, but no solution would reveal itself to us as we prayed. So, we drank sparkling wine while sitting down in silence.

Ποῦ δ' ἀρχὴν γε λάβοιμι τίδε πρότερον καταλέξω
 νυμφείων περ ἀεικελίων τὰ γὰρ ἄμμι ὄρουσεν;²⁰² (225)
 Ὡς οἱ ἀνδράσι πᾶσιν ἔδωκαν εἶμα φαεινὸν
 ξεινόν τ' ἄλλοδαπόν τ' ὥς ἦθός ἐστι γάμοιο
 καὶ ἦκαν νηόνδε δόμονδε θεῶν περικαινῶν²⁰³
 νυμφέα νυμφῆσαι γῆμαι κούρας τερατώδεις.
 Οὐδε τε τῶν νύμφων τινὰ πρὶν ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
 τίς τῶν νυμφώνων· χαλεπὸν ῥα γελῳῖον ἦεν. (230)
 Βῆμεν ἴμεν πρὸς νηὸν ἐγὼ ἰμάντι καὶ ἦγον
 Φράντην θαυμαστὸν πάντων μεταθήτορα γλώσσων
 ὥς ἡμῖν γε μεταθήσῃ ἔπεα πτερόεντα
 ἱεροφαντάων σπονδὰς εὐχὰς τε λόγους τε
 εἶά γε τώνδε τ' ἔσονται ἕως φανερώς ἐπέοικεν (235)
 πᾶσιν νυμφείοισιν ἐνὶ κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν.
 Ἀλλ' οἱ οὐκ ἔθελον Φράντην ἐάσαι ἐνὶ νηῷ
 ὥς ὅγε θηρίον ἦ καὶ θηρία οὐποτ' ἔασαν.
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ δυνάμην πείθειν φάντων ἱερὸν κῆρ
 ὥς ὅδε δ' ἦν γεγωνῶς τεχνησί τε οὐδε φύσει περ (240)
 καὶ οὕτως οὐ θῆρ μούνως θηρέσσι ἐοικῶς
 θηροίδης²⁰⁴ πλαστὸς τὸν καὶ ῥόβοτον καλέουσι.
 Εἰς τέλος οὐκ ἔασαν γ' ἦλθιν νηόνδ' ἱερόνδε
 ἀλλὰ γε νυμφέα πάντ' ἔξω νηοῦ τετελέσθη.

²⁰² Křesadlo has written a normal full stop, but it makes more sense for there to be a question mark here.

²⁰³ Καινός denotes 'novelty': these are gods that have been 'invented/innovated extremely recently', περικαινός is unattested, cf. LSJ s.v. περί F.IV, 'beyond measure, very, exceedingly', i.e., 'extremely strange/new/fresh/novel'.

²⁰⁴ = θηροειδής.

Where should I begin and what should I recount first about those unwilling marriages that sprung on us? How they gave splendid clothing to all the men, strange and alien, as was their custom for marriage, and sent us into their temple, into their house of extremely strange gods, to betroth the brides and marry the monstrous maidens. None of the brides and grooms had seen anyone before with their own eyes, so it was laughably difficult. We left to go to the temple, and I led Franta on a leash, our wonderful translator of all languages, so he could translate the winged words of the hierophants²⁰⁵ for me, their libations, and prayers, and speeches, as well as who will be there as plainly befits all marriages in the depths of the cosmos.²⁰⁶ But they didn't want to allow Franta inside the temple, because he's an animal, and animals are never allowed. I was unable to persuade the sacred heart of those priests that he was born from technological means not from nature, and so he was not an animal but merely resembled animals, and is a counterfeit zoomorph, what they call a 'robot'. In the end, they didn't let him come into the holy temple, the entire wedding ceremony took place outside the temple instead.

²⁰⁵ cf. OED s.v. *hierophant* 1, "an initiating or presiding priest".

²⁰⁶ Playfully ironic to make the reader think about how unlikely it is that marriage ceremonies would be remotely similar between alien species.

Οὐδ' ἄρα ται νύμφαι δύσμορφοι ἄμμι φάνοντο (245)
 ὥς εἶπεν βασιλεύς· ἀλλ' οὐ χαριτός γε δέοντο
 καλλαὶ ἐϋκτίμεναι ὥς ἀστέρα φιλμοφαινὰ
 εὐωποὶ ἐραταί· γήθησε γὰρ ἄμμι φίλον κῆρ.
 Ἐννέα μὲν κοῦραι ἦσαν ἐτάροις ἀραρυῖαι
 παῖδες ἀφνειῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀλλ' ἡ δεκάτη τε (250)
 ἦεν ἐμῇ θυγάτηρ Ῥξ-Φρξ-Πρξ-ὸς βασιλῆος.
 Γργλὰ δέ οἱ ὄνομ' ἔσκε καλὴ μάλα φαίνετο κούρη
 εὖμορφος μεγάλη ξανθαὶ κατέχυντο δ' ἔθειραι.
 Τὴν δέ με βλεψάμενον ἀσπαστον ἔην εὐνάζειν.
 Καὶ μετὰ τῆς τελετῆς δάσαμεν μὲν ἀμύμονα δαῖτα (255)
 κοιράμου εἰν μέγαροις κρέα δ' ἄσπετα καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ
 πάντες δ' ἐζόμενοι νυμφῶνες εἰν δυάδεσσι
 σὺν νύμφησι ἐῆσιν ἀτὰρ ἄλλοι περὶ ἡμᾶς.
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐπεὶ βρώμης τε ποτήτεος ἐξ ἔρου ἔντο
 λάθρα δ' ἀνιστάμενοί περ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι (260)
 φροῦδοι ἔπειτ' ἐγένοντό τε σὺν νύμφησιν ἐῆσιν
 ἀσπαστὸν γὰρ τοῖσιν οἶσατο κοιμηθῆναι.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σὺν παιδί τ' ἐμῇ διέφηναι καὶ αὐτός.
 Βῆμεν ἵμεν θαλάμονδε βασιλείῳ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
 αὖθι δ' ἀφικόμενοι ἄπο δ' ἥρξαμεν εἵματα δῦσαι. (265)

But then the brides didn't seem deformed to us as the king had described, they didn't lack grace either, they were beautiful and well-built like famous movie-stars, fair to look at, and desirable, so our dear hearts rejoiced! There were nine maidens who were pleasing to my companions, they were the children of rich men, but mine was the tenth, the daughter of king Rx-Frx-Prx. Grgla²⁰⁷ was her name, and she seemed like a very beautiful girl, well-formed, tall, and has blond hair flowing around her. She welcomed me to bed her by looking at me longingly. And at the end of the ceremony, we dined on an excellent banquet in the king's hall with endless amounts of meats and sweet wine, all the newly-weds sitting in pairs with their brides, but with others around us too. But when my trusty companions had no more desire for food and drink, then, stealthily rising, they departed with their brides, because they thought it was welcome to sleep with them. I also disappeared myself along with my girl. We left to go to the bedroom in the royal house, and we began to remove our clothes once we'd entered it.

²⁰⁷ *Girgal* is the name of a fantasy novel written by Jan Křesadlo in 1992 about the journeys of mutated dogs through space.

Ἀσπαστός περ ἔρωσ μ' ἔλ' ἐμῇ φιλότῃ μιγῆναι
 νύμφῃ εὐπλοκάμῳ τὴν γὰρ παράκοιτιν ἔθηκαν.
 Ἦρξε δὲ γυμνωθῆναι ἔγωγε τέθηπα γυναῖκα.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἔπειτ' ἐκδύσε τὰ εἵματα σιγαλοέντα
 ἦρξατο ῥ' ἐκδῦσαί γε δέμας αὐτὸν εὐτυκτον. (270)
 Πλαστὸν δ' ἦν τέχνῃσι τετυγμένον· δύσατο δ' αὐτὴ
 σώματος ἐξ αἰσχυρῇ δύσμορφος δυσγενεῆς τε.
 Ὀφθαλμὸν μοῦνον δ' ὥς κύκλωψ²⁰⁸ εἶχε μετώπῳ
 μέσσω· ῥῖνε δύω καὶ ὀδόντας ἦϋτε κάρπος²⁰⁹
 μακροὺς καὶ ὀξέας· αἰσχυρὸν μέγα κνώδαλον²¹⁰ ἦεν. (275)
 Σώματι κυφὴ ἔην μαζοὺς πίσυρας μὲν ἔχουσα
 καὶ ἓνα τῶν μηρῶν δολιχωτέρον ἢδ' ἕτερόν τε.
 Ξάνθαι τῆσδε κόμαι ψεύδεις τε τετυγμέναι ἦσαν
 λισσὸν μὲν τὸ κάρα ψεδνὴ δ' ἄνα δέδραμε λάχνη.
 Ἦ μὲν ἔρωτομένη περ ἐμεῦ πότι χεῖρας ἰάλλεν (280)
 καὶ κυνέειν ἐθέλουσα δ' ἐτόρησεν πυκὰ χεῖλη
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ἰάχων ἐχθήμασι θρώσκον ὀπίσσω.
 Ἦρξε διωκόμεναί με διὰ θαλάμον εὐτυκτον
 ἀρπᾶξαι με θέλουσά τε καὶ φιλότῃ μιγῆναι.
 Τὴν μὲν ἐπεσσυμένην χερσὶν στιβαρῆσιν ἔπληξα (285)
 ἀρνύμενος ψυχὴν· αἰσχυρὸν μάλα κνώδαλον ἦεν.
 Ἦδε μέγαλ' ἰάχησέ τε καὶ ἐκάλησε τοκῆα
 θᾶσσον ἵμεν θαλάμονδέ τ' ἀλεξαμέναι δέ τε κούρη.

²⁰⁸ The immediate allusion would be the Polyphemus episode of the *Odyssey* and thus also bring to mind Odysseus' *me tis/metis* trick.

²⁰⁹ = κάρπος.

²¹⁰ cf. *Odyssey* 17.317 in Eumaeus' description of Odysseus' old hunting dog, Argus.

A welcoming desire grasped me to mingle in love with my fair-haired bride for she was given to me as a bed fellow. She began to strip, and I was amazed at my wife. But when she took off her splendid clothing, she began taking off her own well-wrought skin. It was a counterfeit constructed via technological means, and she herself stripped off her body, ugly, deformed, and degenerate.²¹¹ She had a single eye in the middle of her forehead like a cyclops, two noses and teeth that were long and sharp like a boar's – she was a great, ugly beast. Her body was bent, possessing four breasts, two of which were even longer than her thighs. Her blonde hair was fake and artificially produced, her head was smooth but a thin down run along it. She, in her desire for me, moved her hands in my direction, and pursed her lips firmly, wanting to kiss me, but I leapt back, crying in disgust. She began to follow me throughout the well-built bedroom, wanting to snatch me away and mingle in love with me. I struck her with my strong hands as she charged, trying to preserve my life, since she was a great, ugly beast. She gave a mighty shout and called her father to come to the bedroom quickly and to defend his daughter.

²¹¹ cf. the alien 'pleasure GELF' (Genetically Engineered Life Form) called 'Camille' from *Red Dwarf* season 4 episode 1 "Camille".

Αὐτίκ' ἄναξ ἐπέφην' ἀνάδυσ στολὴν θαλαμείην
 σῶμα διαστρέψας χῶλαινε ποσὶν ἀνίοισιν (290)
 ἀλλὰ μὲν εἰν κεφαλῇ δὲ τετυγμένον εἶχε πρόσωπον
 σὺν δέ τε φῶτε δύω φοιτᾶθον ὄπλα φέροντε.

Ἦδε πολὺν κλαίουσα φίλον πατέρα προσέειπεν
 ἀλλὰ γε τοῖς τὰ ἔπονται ὁμοῖον ῥῆμά γ' ἔνισπεν·
 «Τέθναθι Ρῥ-Φρξ-Πρξ ὃς γὰρ τετόκας τέρας εἶναι (295)
 τέθναθί ρ' ἐξαῦτις ἢ κάκτανε²¹² Οὐδένα φῶτα
 ὃς δέ μ' ἀτίμησεν φιλότῃτι μίγειν ἐθελούσῃν
 ἡέ ρα καὶ πλῆξεν κεφαλὴν χερσὶν στιβαρῇσιν
 νύμφην καὶ κώρην εὐρὺν κρείοντος ἀνακτος.

Τεθναμέναι δέον ἐστὶν ἐπεὶ ἀσέβησε δυνάστην.» (300)

ἽΩς φάτο καὶ βασιλεὺς ἱερῷ κεχολώσατο θυμῷ
 καὶ μ' ἐπίτελλε δυοῖν φύλακοιν εἰργμόνδε βάλεσθαι
 τῷδε λαβέσθην σφόδρα καὶ ἦγετον εἰς φυλακὴνδε
 αὐτὰρ ἄναξ χεῖρ' ἀμφιβάλων ἐκορέσσατο κούρην
 τῷδε μ' ἐφελκομένῳ βάλετον αἰσχυρῷ ἐνὶ ἄντρῳ (305)

ὕγρῳ καὶ δνοφέρῳ τε κακῶδεϊ οὐκ ἀγαθῷ περ
 ἔνθα δ' ἐγὼ στενάχων περ ἔμεινον ἡδὰ διᾶν²¹³
 ἦδ' ἄρα μοι νύμφης τέρψις ἦν καὶ ὕμεναίων.
 Ἦμος δ' ἡριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠὼς
 [ζείνη καὶ χαλεπὴ οὕπως ὥς μητέρι Γαίῃ] (310)
 ἦλθετον ἄνδρε δύω γε δικαστῶν εἶδος ἔχοντε
 καὶ μὲν φωνήσαντέ τι μύθεσθαι μεμάτην.

²¹² = κατακτείνω, cf. *Iliad* 6.164 (sole usage).

²¹³ i.e., the sun.

The ruler immediately appeared wearing a dressing gown, his distorted body was lame with legs of uneven length, and he had an artificially constructed face on his head, but two men came along with him, carrying weapons. Then she addressed her dear father in great floods of tears and told the same sort of things to those who were following behind him.

“Die, Rx-Frx-Prx, for you are the one who bore me as a monster, die at once, or slay this man Oudeis, who has slighted me when I wanted to mingle in love with him and even struck with his strong hands my head – his bride and the daughter of a king who’s rule extends far and wide. He must die, because he’s acted impiously towards the ruler!”

So she spoke, and the king grew angry in his reverent heart, and ordered two of his guards to throw me in prison, so the two violently grabbed me and led me to the prison-ward. Then the lord sated his daughter by putting his hands around her, but the two men threw me in a shameful cave after dragging me away, it was dank, dark, and foul smelling, not good at all. Then, groaning, I awaited the sweet goddess, such was my enjoyment of my bride and wedding night! When Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [alien and terrifying, not at all like on mother Earth], two men came that had the look of judges and made utterances in an attempt to express something.

Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ μὲν οὔτι ρ' ἐπίστασθαι κράτος εἶχον.
 Τοῖσι δὲ χερσὶν ἐμῆς σήμαινον ἥδ' ἐμιμοῦμην²¹⁴
 Φράντην πάγγλωσσόν μοι ἐνέγκειν εἰς φυλακὴνδε (315)
 ὥς ἀλλήλοισιν ὁ μεταφρήσει τὸ ῥῆμα.
 Τῷ μὲν ἐπισταμένῳ ἅπ' ἅρ' ἤλυθέτην κριτᾶ ἄνδρε
 καὶ πάλιν ἐρχομένῳ κομπὸν ἠνέγκατο Φράντην
 εἰς· προσεφωνεέτην ἦτορ περοέσσιν ἔπεσσιν,
 ἀλλὰ δὲ Φράντα μεταφρηζὼν μετέθηκα τὸ ῥῆμα. (320)
 «Σοὶ μὲν νῦν ὦ ξεῖνε δίκη κρίσις ἡδέ' ἀγὼν περ
 ἔσσεται εἰν αὐλῇ τῇ κρίνομεν ὥστε δικασταὶ
 ὥς ὅτ' ἀτιμήσας κούρην κρατεροῖο ἄνακτος
 σὴν ἄλοχον τῇ περ εὔδειν πάρα οὐκ ἐθέλησας
 – αὐτῆς μὲν πόσις ὦν τόδ' ὀχεύειν²¹⁵ καὶ δέον ἐστι – (325)
 τὴν γὰρ καὶ πλῆξαις τῷ μὲν βασιλῇ' ἀσέβησαις.
 Τοῦτων μὲν θάνατος τίσις ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ σοὶ ἔσται
 ὀρθὴ δ' ἰσονόμη κρίσις ὥς ἡμᾶς ἐπέοικεν.
 Ὡρα σοὶ γε δύο μὲν ἔσει παρασκευάζεσθαι
 σὴν δ' ἀπολουγίην πρὶν γ' αὐλῇ βῆμ' ἐπιβῆναι.» (330)
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ κριτῆς ἄμφω λιπέτην δέ τε τρώγλην
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι πεπιθόντι κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ.

²¹⁴ This scene demonstrates the need for interpretation in many epic scenes, cf. *Astr.* 9.280-1.

²¹⁵ cf. *Astr.* 5.139, ὀχεύω is usually used on animals, not people (cf. LSJ s.v. ὀχεύω II.2); cf. *Red Dwarf* season 6 episode 4 “*Emohawk: Polymorph II*”.

But I couldn't understand them at all. I would make signs with my hands and express through imitation that I wanted them to bring Franta the polyglot to me in the prison, so that he could translate the words for each one of us. The two judges understood then left, and came back again bringing clever Franta with them. They addressed my heart in winged words, and my translator Franta translated their words:

"Your lawsuit, alien, begins now, and there will be a trial held in the hall that we make decisions as judges in, because you have slighted the daughter of a powerful lord, your partner, whom you didn't want to sleep next to – even though you're her husband and you must have sex with her – for you even struck her, because of which you have committed an act of impiety towards our king. The repayment for these acts is death, but you shall have a just and fair trial as befits one of us. You will have two hours to prepare your defence before entering the stand in the hall."

So the judges both spoke, and left the hole behind, but my dear heart shattered when I heard them.

Εὐμήθης²¹⁶ λόγος ἦν ὡς κεκταμέναι μεμάωντο
 οὐκενα Ῥξ-Φρξ-Πρξ-ὶ κοραύνην οὐκ ἐπίβησα
 τοῦ στυγέως ἔνεκεν· αἰσχρὸν μάλα κνώδαλου ἦεν. (335)
 Καὶ βαρέα στενάχων περ ἐπεύχεσθαι μεμάμηκα
 εἴ κέν τις ζῶη θεὸς εἰν κόσμοιο βάθεςσιν²¹⁷.
 Αὐτίκα δὴ μοι πρῆξις ἔφηκεν μυρομένῳ περ.
 Φράντα πολὺγλωσσος μὲν ἔχεν καὶ ῥαδιόφωνον
 τῷ μὲν σύνταξός τοι ἔην σὺν νηὶ μελαίνῃ (340)
 καὶ σὺν κομπουτῆρι δ' μὲν ῥ' ἦν νηὶ μέγιστος
 ἄρχων τῶν πάντων ῥοβότων σύστημά τε πρῶτον.
 Καίσαρά μιν πάντες μὲν ἐπίκλησιν καλέοντο.
 Τῷ περ Φράντα μεταφῆζων συνταγμένος ἦεν.
 Καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ ἰδὲ καὶ ἐτάροις ἦν ῥαδιόφωνοι (345)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τοὺς λίπομεν ὀπίσω ἐν νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 νήπιοι· αὐτὰρ Φράντα γ' ἔχεν “*νευρωμένον ἔνδον*”
 ὥς περ ταῦτα καλοῦσι σοφοὶ ἠλεκτρικοὶ ἄνδρες.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Φράντη μετεθήτορι νῦν ἐπιτέλλον
 κομπουτῆρα μέγαν συντάξαι ῥηδιόφωνῳ (350)
 τὸν πρῶτον καὶ οἱ τεῖλαι ῥόβοτόν γ' ἀποπέμψαι
 εἰς αὐλὴν κρίσεως ὃ γ' Ἴβω²¹⁸ μὲν οὔνομ' ἔχεσκεν.
 Ἄγριος ἦν ῥόβοτος πολεμιστῆς ὀπλοφορευτῆς
 τῷ γε τύπῳ τὸν μὲν *ΡΟΒΟΚΟΠ* κλήσιν καλέουσι
 πολλοῖσιν γ' ἀραρῶς φείσορισιν δεινοτόκοισιν. (355)
 Τῷ μὲν Ἴβω γ' ὄνομ' ἔσκεν ἐπεὶ ῥα σιδήρεος ἦεν.

²¹⁶ Obscure sense, the Czech suggests ‘from the beginning’.

²¹⁷ Protasis of a ‘*vivid future*’ conditional (εἰ + ἄν + subj., ‘*if by chance...*’).

²¹⁸ Weise (2024:276-7) says that the robot Ivo is named after Ivo Železný, Křesadlo’s publisher, and is called σιδήρεος (‘*made of iron*’) because Ivo’s surname ‘*Železný*’ also means ‘*made of iron*’.

It was well reported from the beginning that they intended on slaying me because I could not 'board' Rx-Frx-Prx's daughter due to her dreadfulness, since she was a great, ugly beast. And with heavy groans I tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, and a solution immediately revealed itself to me as I shed my tears. Franta the polyglot also possessed a radiophone that was connected to our black ship and its computer, which was the greatest on the ship, and was the main thing in charge of all the robotic systems. Everyone called it 'Tsar'²¹⁹, and our translator Franta was connected to it. My companions and I also had radiophones, but we left them behind back on our black ship like fools. Franta, however, had one that was "internally innervated",²²⁰ as electronic scientists call them. But I now ordered our translator Franta to contact the great computer with his radiophone, and make it first send a robot that had the name 'Ivo' to the courtroom where the trial was taking place. He was a savage, weaponised, combat robot, the type that are referred to by the name ROBOCOP, which are furnished with many kinds of fear-inducing phasers. His name was Ivo since he was made of iron²²¹.

²¹⁹ Lit. 'Caesar'.

²²⁰ i.e., connected to nerves.

²²¹ See note opposite about Ivo being the name of Křesadlo's publisher.

Τὸν μὲν Ἴβω Φράντη πέμψαι αὐλήνδ' ἐπίτελλον
 τεῖλαι τῷδ' ἄρχοντι ῥοβούτων νηὶ μελαίνῃ.
 Ἀγγελίην ἀπόπεμψε ἀπόκρισις καὶ πάλιν ἦλθεν
 ὥς ὥρα γε δύω μέτα τὸν ῥόβοτον ἀποπέμψαι. (360)
 Οὕτως ἐλπόμενοί περ ἐμείναμεν ὅξυν ἀγῶνα.
 Ἀλλ' ὥς μὲν ὥρα γε δύω ἐξοιχνησαίτην
 ἦλθε φύλαξ φυλακὴνδε φέρειν αὐλήν κρισέος δε
 ἔμμε τε καὶ Φράντην μεταθήτορα ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη.
 Βῆμεν ἵμεν ποτὶ πύργον ὃς αὐλῆς τῆς τέγος ἦεν (365)
 καὶ μὲν ἐσελθομένοι γε καθήμεθα εἰν ἔδρησιν
 ἀνδροφύλαξ²²² καὶ ἐγὼ καὶ Φράντα ῥόβως πολυτέχνης
 καὶ βραδέως πίμλαντο δόμοι πολλοῖσι βροτοῖσι
 ἀνδράσι ἢ γυναιξὶ νέοισί τε καὶ γεραοῖσιν,
 ἀλλὰ δέ τ' εἷς ἥκόν περ ἐμοὺς ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους (370)
 πάντας ἐξείης ὑπ' ἀνδράσι ὅπλοφόροισιν,
 καὶ φανερώς ἐνεκέν γε θεωρίης παρ' ἐμείης
 ὥστε τίσιν μάθοιεν ἐμὴν κούρας τε φίλοιεν.
 Ὑστεροὶ αὖτις ἔσηλθον ἀγαυοὶ ἀνδροδίκασται
 σεμνοί· κάθιζον δέ τ' ἐν ὑψηλοῖσι θρόνοισι (375)
 ἀλλὰ γε ὥς πύματος Ῥξ-Φρξ-Πρξ αὐτος ἔφηνε
 μαρτυρεῖν μεμαῶς Γργλή σὺν οἱ τρέχε κούρη
 σφόδρα δ' ἀγαλλομένη ψευδὲς κάλλος φορέουσα.

²²² Křesadlo has written ἀνδοφύλαξ, which is a spelling mistake.

I ordered Franta to send Ivo to the hall, so that it could be accomplished by the leader of the robots in our black ship. He sent my message, and the answer came back that it would send the robot after two hours. So we hopefully awaited the strict trial. But when the two hours passed, a guard came to the prison take me and my translator Franta to the courtroom as was necessary. We went to go to the tower which was the roof of the hall, and we sat down on stools after entering: the guard of the men, me, and Franta the robot with many skills. And slowly the house was filled with many mortal men and women, both young and old. But all my trusty companions were also led in, one after the other, by weapon-bearing men, and by my side, clearly for the sake of the spectacle, so that they learn from my example to love the girls. Later, the noble judges entered solemnly, and sat on their lofty thrones, but in the last spot there appeared Rx-Frx-Prx himself, intending on giving witness testimony, and Grgla his daughter ran with him, exceedingly delightful, wearing her deceptive beauty.

Δμῶς μὲν τις σάλπιγξεν ἀνὴρ προχορήματος ἀρχὴν
 καὶ κρίσεος· πάντες δέ τ' ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ. (380)
 Τοῖσιν μὲν κριτῆς παλαιώτερος ἤρξεν ἀγῶνα
 ἀλλ' οὐκ αὖ δεκ' ἔπη εἶπεν ὅπῃ κραζομένη περ
 καὶ ρόβοτος πολεμιστὰ φάνη θύρης μεγάλῃσιν
 καὶ μὲν χειρ' αἶρων βάλεν ἀκτὶν ἀρχιδικάστην
 φείσρου δ' ἐκ λυγροῦ· ὃδ' ἄφαντος ἔφφ' ἀφανίζων. (385)
 Πάντας γὰρ φοβερὸς μὲν ἔλε τρόμος αὐτὰρ ἑταῖροι
 χεῖρεςσι κρότεον ρόβοτον καὶ ἠῦκομίζαν.
 Μοῦνος μὲν βασιλεὺς αὐτῶν ρόβοτον προσέειπεν
 νεικομένοις ἔπεισιν· ὃδ' αὖ βάλε σιγαλοέντα
 τὸν θρόνον· ὃς μὲν ἄφαντος ἔφφ' ὃ πέσεν δὲ χαμᾶζε (390)
 τῇδε καθιζόμενος βασιλεὺς ἀκέων τρέμε γυῖα.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μὲν ἀνιστάμενος πάντας προσέειπον
 καὶ ἡμῖν φείσρους δομέναι πάλιν καρτερ' ἔτελλον
 εἰ μὴ τὸν κόραμον κτάμεναι ἡμᾶς γε θέλοιεν.
 Αὐτίκα τις φυλάκων ἔφερεν φείσρους πολυπίκρους (395)
 καὶ μὲν ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἑταροῖς εἰν χερσὶν ἔθηκεν.
 Νῦν ὀπλισάμενοι ἔχομεν βασιλῆά τε λαόν.

Some servant blew a trumpet, preluding the start of the trial, and everyone silently went quiet. Then, a venerable judge began the trial, but hadn't spoken even ten words in his croaking voice, when the combat robot appeared in the great door and lifting his hand he shot a ray at the chief-judge from his deadly phaser, and he disappeared after becoming transparent. A quake of fear seized everyone, but my companions even commended the mighty robot with their hands. Only their king addressed the robot in abusive words, but he shot at his resplendent throne, which became invisible, and he fell to the ground, sitting here the king in silence as his limbs trembled. But I, after standing up, addressed everyone, and ordered in a strong voice that they give us back the phasers, and that if they didn't want to, then we would kill their king. One of the guards immediately brought the complex phasers and placed them in my and my companions' hands. Now that we were armed we had control over the king and the people.

Αὐτὰρ ἔγωγε τὸ βῆμ' ἐπιβὰς πάντας προσέειπεν·
 «Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων κακὰ περ πάσχοντες ἅπαντες.²²³
 Ἄμμε γὰρ οὐ θυμὸς ὀλέσαι ὑμᾶς περ ἀνώγει (400)
 Μοῦνος οὐ θέλομεν μεῖναι σὺν ὕμμι πολῖταις
 ἢ ἐκ εὐνάζειν κούρησιν ἀνεικελίησιν,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμῖν πρῆξις ἐνὶ διαστήμασι κόσμου.
 Γινώμεν ὅπως ἔθελοιτ' ἡμᾶς τεκέειν κλυτὰ τέκνα
 κούρης ὑμετέρης ἐπεὶ ὑμῶν προπάτωρες (405)
 βόμβησιν γε πυρηνιακῆς ζάφθαρκαν²²⁴ ἅπαντα
 θηρία καὶ βοτάνην καὶ ἄνδρας ἢ γυναικας
 παμπόλλους· μοῦνον τεράτων δὲ πανοπτικόν ἐστι.²²⁵
 Ὑμεῖς συμπηθοῦμεν ἰδ' οὐκ ἐχθράζομεν ὕμμι
 ὥς καταρυκέμεναι²²⁶ μεμάατε γυναιξί τε ζεῖξαι (410)
 ἀλλὰ γε ἅμμιν ὁδὸς κεῖται κόσμοιο κενοῖο.
 Ἄλλο δὲ νῦν ἐρέω καὶ φέρτερον εἶναι ὀϊῶ·
 Ἄνῃρ ἱητήρ περ ἔνεστιν ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν
 πάνσοφος καὶ εἰδὼς πυκινὰ φρεσὶ χρήματα πολλὰ
 τῆς φύσεως· ὃ μὲν οἶδε φυλάσσειν σπέρματα φωτὸς (415)
 ψύχει ἢ ὕτε καινὰ²²⁷ διαὶ μακροῖο χρόνοιο
 καὶ τε τετηκότα δ' αὖθροεῖν θήλεσσι γυναιξίν.
 οὗτος ὑμετέρους μὲν ἱητήρας τὰ δίδασκει.
 Ἡμεῖς σπέρματα πολλὰ πεπηγμένα δ' ἄντι λίποντες
 πτησόμεθ' εἰς κόσμον· ἑτέροισι καλὴ φάνε βουλή· (420)
 ἅμμι πορευέμεναι ὑμῖν κλυτὰ τέκνα τέκεσθαι.»

²²³ cf. *Astr.* 5.169; cf. *Odyssey* 10.189, 12.271, 12.340.

²²⁴ = διαφθείρω (δια/ζα).

²²⁵ cf. *Astr.* 5.197.

²²⁶ Probably from κατερύκω.

²²⁷ Καινός is a novelty marker, New vs. Old.

But after climbing the stand, I addressed everyone:

“Hear my words, even though you are all suffering misfortune! For our hearts do not compel us to destroy you. Only, we don’t want to stay behind in your city or even sleep with your ugly daughters, but there is a deed waiting for us in the hollows of the universe. We understand that you would like us to produce glorious children for your girls, since your ancestors have ruined everything with nuclear bombs, all the animals and plants and men and women. It’s entirely a cabinet of curiosities. We are sympathetic to your cause and aren’t your enemies, that you intended on holding us back and joining us to your women in wedlock, but a path lies for us through the empty cosmos. But I’ll tell you another thing now, and I suppose it’s better. There is a doctor amongst my comrades, he’s all-wise and knows many complex things about nature in his mind. He knows how to keep men’s sperm cold like new for a long time and when it thaws, he knows how to inject it into women again. This doctor will teach you about these things. And after leaving much of our previously frozen sperm behind, we shall fly into the cosmos. This seems like fine plan for both sides: for us to go on our way and produce glorious children for you.”

Ὡς ἐφάμην ὁ μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.
 Ἐνθ' αὐτοὶ πάντες τοὶ ἐπευφήμησαν ἄριστοι
 σπέρματα δεξαμένοι ἐάσαι δέ τε νῆα πορεύειν
 πρόφρονες ὥς φεῖσροι μὲν ἐϋφροσύνησιν ἄλλεζον. (425)
 Τοῦ μύθου λοιποῦ κατά δ' οὐ λέξαιμι ἕκαστα
 τεχνικὰ ἱητῶν ἀνδρῶν πυκά· αἰδέομαι γάρ.
 Εἰς τέλος εὐξέστην ἐπιβήσαμεν ἡῦα νῆα
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θαλάμοιο κοραύνων δυσγενεάων.²²⁸
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος δ' ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα (430)
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες.
 Ἐνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 Μανδῶν ζητοῦτες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.

²²⁸ Self-parodying Křesadlo's own closing formulae: ἄσμενοι + ἐκ have previously been used with θανάτοιο, but here Křesadlo subverts the expected noun with θαλάμοιο, a pun since the two words have similar sound qualities (initial θα, internal α, a Homeric genitive οιο ending, acute ending on the antepenult, same number of syllables).

So I spoke, and my translator translated my words for them. Then all the noblemen themselves shouted in approval, and after accepting the sperm they willingly allowed us to head back to the ship, since the phasers helped them make the reasonable decision. Concerning the rest of the story, I won't tell you everything in exact detail, because the doctor's technologies are complicated, and I am ashamed. In the end, we boarded our good, well-polished ship, glad to have escaped the bride-chamber of the degenerate maidens. The rocket propelled the beautifully-constructed ship at once, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind us. From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

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Book 6

[The events concerning the double planet and the rest]

And then we arrived at a planet after swimming amongst the stars [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe], alien and unusual and novel, a wonder to behold. There were two yoked together like a dumbbell, the one which circus folk use to exercise in ancient times with one another. The two planets were yoked together by an immense and overly large bar. It seemed like a dumbbell to us as we arrived, shining in the black darkness of the empty universe, and rotating slowly. My dear heart urged me to investigate and disembark onto this land and find out what it's like there. So, I immediately aimed the sensors at the planet to see if there was air on it, as well as heat and water like on Earth, and the sensors confirmed it. And I was now piloting the ship towards the planet.

Ἀυτὰρ ἐπεὶ ζαπέδω κατερύξαμεν ἀστερονῆα²²⁹
 οὐρανόθεν παμένοι καὶ ἔστημεν καταβάντες
 τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ κρίνας ἐτάρω δὴ ἔξοχ' ἀρίστω
 καὶ τρίτατον ὀπάσας ρόβοτόν γ' ἔνεκεν φυλακείης
 [οὐδ' ἄρ' ἄνευ φυλακῆς ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν] (20)
 πέμξα δὲ τὴν χώρηνδ' ἵμεναι ἰδὲ καὶ σκοπέεσθαι
 αἵτινες οὐσῖαι ἦν ἀστέρι βρώματ' ἔδουσαι
 εἴ πως ἀγριόθυμοι ὑπερίαλαί τε κακαί τε
 ἦε φιλόξενοι καὶ θυμὸν δ' ἠδὺν ἔχουσαι
 οἷδ' αἶψ' οἰχόμενοι ξεῖνον εὖρον πτολίεθρον²³⁰ (25)
 καὶ οὐκ εἴσηλθον νόστησαν λάθρα θέοντες
 καὶ μοι ἡγγειλον θαυμαστὸν πρῆγμα ἄπιστον·
 οὐκ ἀνθρωποῖδεῖς μορφαὶ πτολίεθρον ἔναιον
 ἀλλὰ κύνες δέ τινες νόον ἀνθρώπειον ἔχοντες.
 Τοῖσιν ἔτι φράζουσι κύνες στεῖχον ποτὶ νῆα (30)
 πάμπολλοι χηλῆς σφετέρηφιν ὄπλα φέροντες
 ἐχθρόμενοι· τῷδ' ἄμμι κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ.
 Οἱ μὲν μυρίοι ἦσαν ἰδ' αὖ φέρον ἀγλαὰ ὄπλα
 φείσοις ἡμετέροισιν ἐσικότα· ρεῖα δύναιντο
 πάντας ἄμμι· ὀλέσαι καὶ αὐτὴν νῆα μέλαιναν. (35)
 Οὐ καὶ καιρὸς ἔην ἐλάσαι καλεργέα νῆα
 εἰς ζακενόν·²³¹ μάλα γὰρ αὐτοὶ νῦν ἐγγύες ἦσαν.

²²⁹ 'Starship' is the name given to many kinds of spaceship in *Star Trek*, e.g., the 'Starship Enterprise', and describes a spaceship that's capable of interstellar travel by going (1) near-light-speed, (2) faster-than-light, or (3) folding spacetime to create wormholes; it's not explicitly stated which one the *Tolma* uses, but the seemingly near instantaneous travel between planets from book-to-book suggests either the second or third options; assuming the *Tolma* works like the *Starship Enterprise* then it's probably uses the second option, faster-than-light via a 'warp drive/engine' as in *Star Trek*.

²³⁰ cf. *Astr.* 2.11-13.

²³¹ (δῖα/ζα).

But when we brought the starship to a halt on the ground, flying down from the sky and stood there after we'd made our descent. I chose two of my very best men, and after making a robot follow them as a third for the sake of their protection [since experience taught us not to be without a guard], I sent them to go to the country and see what kind of food-eating beings there are in the star system, whether they are wild, arrogant, and base, or friendly and kind-hearted. Quickly departing, they discovered a strange city, and they didn't enter it, but came running back to me in secret, and reported wonderful, incredible things to me: beings that have the outward appearance of humans don't inhabit the city, but some dogs that have human-like intelligence do. Then while they were still speaking, numerous hostile dogs approached the ship carrying weapons in their claws, at which our dear hearts shattered. They were countless and brought splendid weapons that resembled our own phasers. They could have easily destroyed us all, including our black ship itself. we no longer even had an opportunity to propel the beautifully-constructed ship into the vacuum of space because they were too close now.

Ἡμεῖς μὲν κλαίοντες ἐπεύχεσθαι μεμάαμεν
 εἰ κέν τις ζῶη θεὸς εἰν κόσμιοι²³² βάθεσσιν
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μυρομένοισιν²³³ (40)
 οἶδε κύνες θᾶσσόν περ ἴσαν φείσοισι σέοντες
 ἡμεῖς αὖτε ταχῶς φύγομεν εἰς νῆα μέλαιναν
 τῷ σκάφεϊ²³⁴ κρύπτεσθαι εὐκτιμένῳ πολυέργῳ
 ἡὲ καὶ τηλεβόλον φεῖσπον τρώχειρον²³⁵ ἔχεσθαι
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις ἔλπις ἔην· μάλα μυρίοι ἦσαν. (45)
 Τοὺς μὲν ἐποιχομένους ἴδομεν ἐν τηλεορήσει²³⁶
 πολλοὺς δείδοντες καὶ ἀμηχανίῃ δ' ἔχε θυμόν.
 Αὐτίκα τοὺς ἴδομεν στρέψαι πάλιν ἡὲ βάλεσθαι
 καὶ βαλέειν φείσοισιν ἐπεὶ ἄλλος στρατὸς ἦλφεν²³⁷
 καὶ τοὺς μαρναμένους ἔχθρους ἴδομεν πελάσαντας (50)
 ἦως αἰλούρους εἰν Γαίῃ θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι.
 Οἶδε κύνες τε καὶ αἵλουροι ἔριδα προέφαινον
 βαλλόμενοι ἀλλήλοισιν φείσοισι λυγροῖσιν.²³⁸
 Πολλοὶ βαλλόμεσοι αἰεὶ ἐγένοντο ἀφάντοι.
 Ὑμεῖς θαρσομένοι θήησαμεν ὀξὺν ἀγῶνα. (55)
 Ἐξαπίνης ὑπὸ ποσσὶν ἀνοίγνυ χάσμα κελαινὸν
 καὶ πέσομεν μὲν ἔνδον· ἀτὰρ φόβος εἴλε φίλον κῆρ.

²³² Křesadlo has written κόσμοι, but this is clearly a spelling mistake.

²³³ Protasis of a 'vivid future' conditional (εἰ + ἄν + subj., 'if **by chance**...'), we'd expect the apodosis to be in the future or aorist tense, but we are surprised with an imperfect indicative, a 'past general' conditional ('**but no solution would**...').

²³⁴ Un-Homeric form, cf. LSJ s.v. σκάφη I.1, "Hom. only in Dim. σκαφίς".

²³⁵ = πρόχειρος (?)

²³⁶ Křesadlo's coinage for 'television'.

²³⁷ = ἦλθεν, cf. Cunliffe Homer s.v. ἀλφάνω, "Aor. ἦλθον Il. 21.79".

²³⁸ The immediate Classical analogue of battling between non-human creatures is Pseudo-Homer's *Batrachomyomachia*, "The Battle of Frogs and Mice".

Weeping, we tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, but no solution would reveal itself to us as we shed our tears. The dogs swiftly approached us while waving their phasers, we in turn quickly fled back onto our black ship to hide in its hull, which was well-constructed and highly-worked, and to point the readied phaser-cannons, but there was no hope, since they were just too numerous. We saw many of them approaching on the television, we were afraid and our hearts felt helpless. We immediately saw that they were turning back around, and being hit and shooting their phasers since another army had come, and we see enemies approaching to fight them that looked like the cats on Earth, it was a wonder to behold. The dogs and the cats put their rivalry on display, shooting one another with their deadly phasers. Many in the middle of the shooting now disappeared. Then after plucking up the courage, we watched the fierce contest. Then all a sudden a black chasm opened up beneath our feet and we fell inside, then fear seized our dear hearts.

- Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ἔνδον ἵκεν ναῦς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 ἦῤτε ἐκκρεμεές τι παλαίου ὥρολόγοιο
 ῥεῖα σαλευόμενῃ γε διαὶ διαστήματα μακρὰ (60)
 δεινὸν ἐπεσσυμένη· τὸ κατεκλάσθη δὲ φίλον κῆρ.
 Εἰς τέλος καὶ βραδέως ἔστηκεν ναῦς εὐτύκῃ
 ἡμεῖς τηλεορήσει ὁπώσαμεν αἶνα θέητρα.
 Πλανήτης γλαφυρὸς μὲν ἔην εὐρύς τε μέγας τε
 σφαῖρα ὑπερμεγεθὴς κοίλῃ καὶ ὀμβριμόεργος²³⁹ (65)
 ἀλλ' ἡ ναῦς σὺν ἄμμῳ κρεμάσθῃ εἶν μέσῳ ἦεν.
 Οὐ γὰρ τις μὲν ἦν πλανήτῃ ἴς βαρύτητος
 μῦνον ἐν ἐξοτέρῳ· ἀλλ' ἔνδον οὔτις ἔσκε
 ὥς ἡ ἴς βαρύτητος ἐφέλκετο πάντοθεν ἴση
 πάντα καταντικρύ·²⁴⁰ τῷδ' ἴς λέλυται βαρύτητος. (70)
 Οὐδ' ἔνδον σκότος ἦεν· ἐλάμπετο πάμπολα λύχνα
 ἔκ φάος ὁξὺ δίδοντα ἔην ὥς ἡμαρ ἄριστον
 πολλὰ γε χρήματα καινὰ ἐλεύσομεν αὖθι πέτασθαι.
 Ἐξαῦτις ζῶων ποτὶ νῆα μὲν ἦλθεν ὄμιλος
 ἀνθρώποισιν ὅμοιος ἀτὰρ πτάτο ἦῤτ' οἰωνοὶ (75)
 εἶν ζακενῶ·²⁴¹ μηχανήμα μὲν ὅμοιος εἶχεν ἕκαστος
 ἦῤτ' ἀσκαυλόν· τόνδ' ἀσκον φῦσεν ἕκαστος
 ἦ στόματ' ἦ φύσῃ καὶ χερσὶν θλίβειτ' ἕκαστος
 αὐλὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ὀπίσω πνείων μιν ἔλαυνεν
 οὐ γὰρ φώνησεν ὥς ἀσκαυλοὶ ἐπὶ Γαίῃς (80)
 ἀλλὰ κινήσεος ὥς μηχανήματα πνεῦε σιωπῇ.

²³⁹ cf. *Iliad* 5.403, 22.418, Hesiod *Theogony* 996; cf. LSJ s.v. ὀβριμοεργός, “*doing strong deeds, but always in bad sense, doing deeds of violence or wrong, esp. against the gods*”; cf. *Astr.* 1.5.

²⁴⁰ Křesadlo has written καταντκρύ but this is a spelling mistake.

²⁴¹ (δῖα/ζα).

But when the ship was inside, it went this way and that way like something hanging from an ancient clock, smoothly oscillating side-to-side over a long distance, fearfully moving, which made our dear hearts shatter. In the end, our well-constructed ship slowly came to a halt, and we saw on the television a grim spectacle. The planet was hollow, broad, and large, it was an immensely huge sphere, empty and of mighty scale, but the ship was suspended in the middle with us on it. For the planet had no gravitational power at all, only on its outside, but inside there was nothing, because its gravitational power was pulling everything opposite equally from all sides, and so the gravitational force disappeared. There was no darkness inside, numerous lamps were shining, emitting a light so sharp it was like a fine day. We saw that there were many novel things flying about in there. Suddenly, a throng of living beings approached the ship, they resembled humans but flew like birds in empty space. Each had a machine on his shoulders like a bagpipe, and each man inflated his bagpipe with his mouth or by breaking wind, and each squeezed it with their hands, then the pipe itself propelled him by blowing backwards. For they made no noise as the bagpipes on Earth do, but blew in silence like machines used for movement.

Τῷ μὲν ἔην φανερόν καὶ ἄῃρ' ἔνδον ἔνειναι.
 Τοῖδ' ἀσκαυλόμενοι πτάμενοι βῆσαν ποτὶ νῆα
 καὶ χερσὶ φράζοντο φιλόξεinoι φίλοι εἶναι
 ἡμεῖς πειράζοντες ἀνοίξαμεν εὐκτιτὰ νῆα (85)
 ἀλλ' οὐ τοὺς φείσους λυγροὺς παλάμηφι λίποντες
 ἀνδροφόνους ταχέας· ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν.
 Ἄνδρες ἀσκαυλισταὶ ἔβαν εἰς νῆα μέλαιναν
 καὶ μὲν ἀφικόμενοί περ ἔσταν ἐν ἡῇρι ἕκαστος
 σὺν ἡμῖν· οὐτις ἦν ἔνδον ἱς βαρύτητος. (90)
 Ἀστεῖοίς²⁴² γε λόγοις ἄμμ' ἀσπάζοντ' ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.
 τοὺς ἔτι μυθομένους γε θεωροῦμεν σκοπέοντες·
 Ἀνδράσι γηγενέσιν ἔσαν μὲν εἰκότες ἄνδρες
 ἀλλὰ τε μηκότεροι καὶ ἀσθενέες περὶ πάντων (95)
 γυίοισιν μῆκοις καὶ λεπτοῖς ἤϋτ' ἀράχνοι
 οὐ γὰρ εἶν ἀβάρει χρεῖη σθενεός τε καὶ ἀλκῆς·
 Τοῖσι δέ τις κόραμος ἔπεα πτεροέντα πρόσευδα.²⁴³
 «Ξεῖνοι οἵτινές ἐστε, πόθεν πλέτε χάσματα κόσμου
 ναι μάλλα ὄλβιοί ἐστε ἐπεὶ φύγετ' αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον (100)
 φείσους οἰκτροφόρους λυγροὺς ἰδὲ καὶ κύνας ἀργοὺς
 ἢ γαλέας· νῦν γὰρ πολεμίζουσιν σὺν ἑαυτοῖς
 ἀλλ' ὅμῃν πλοῖον μὲν ἐρύσαμεν ἐνδοθεν εἶναι.

²⁴² Also 'charming, refined, elegant, witty'.

²⁴³ = προσσυνδάω (?)

From which it was clear that there was air inside them. The flying bagpipers came towards the ship and proved themselves to be friendly to strangers, so we tested that by opening up our well-built ship, but we did not leave in our hands our deadly phasers which can kill men quickly, as experience has taught us. Bagpipers came onto our black ship and once they'd arrived each one stood in the air with us, since there was no gravitational force inside. With polite words they gave us a kind welcome in their land, then Franta our translator translated their words for us. We were amazed as we looked at them while they were stilling talking. These men resembled men born on Earth, but were taller and weak in every respect, with limbs that were long and slender like spiders, for there's no need for them to possess power and strength in their weightless state. Then some lord addressed them in winged words:

"Aliens, who are you? Where in the hollows of the universe have you sailed from? Yes, you're very lucky, since you've escaped utter destruction, the deadly phasers that bear grief, as well as the swift dogs and cats. For they are currently warring with themselves, but we have drawn your vessel to be inside here.

Υμῖν καὶ ἡμῖν ζώῃ δ' ἡδεῖα τέτυκται
ἔνδον· οἳ δὲ κύνες γαλεῆς ἔξοθε μάχονται. (105)

Εἰρωτᾶτε λόγον τούτων καὶ αἰτίην τε;
ἀργαλέον καὶ μακρὸν ἐνίσπειν πρῆγματα πάντα
βέλτιστον δ' εἶη κατάλεξαι ἀμύμονι δαιτί.
Ὅρνυτε νῦν ξεῖνοι καὶ ἵμεν πόλιν ἢ δόμονδε
ἄρχοντος· ὃ γὰρ ὕμμι ἴδειν θέλει ἢ ἐπαιίνειν. (110)

Υμῖν ἀσκαλοὺς ἠνέγκαμεν αἰψακινητὰς
οὐ γὰρ τῶν χρεῖη χαλεπὴ δ' εἶη μεμαθῆναι
καὶ ἵμεν εἰς ἄρχοντα ἀμύμονι δαιτί πάσσασθαι.»
Ὡς φάτο μυθόμενος ἡμῖν δὲ πέπεσθε φίλον κῆρ.
Δῶσαν δ' ἀσκαυλοὺς ῥα (115)

πόλινδε δόμονδε πετᾶσθαι.

Βῆμεν ἐκεῖ πτάμενοι πολυπρηγμοσύνη δ' ἔχε θυμὸν
οὗ δ' ἄρ' ἄνευ ὅπλων· ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν.
Πάντες γὰρ ἔχομεν κάψησιν ἀμύμονα ὅπλα
οἷά τε συγγραφέες σαῖ-φαῖ φείσρους καλέουσιν.
Αὐτὰρ δῶμ' ἄρχοντος ἐλεύσαμεν αὐτῶν ἀῆρι (120)
κερμαστόν·²⁴⁴ εὖτυκτον ἔην μέγα σιγαλοές τε.
Τὴν μὲν οἰκίην εἰσβήσαμεν ὥς ὅτε σφῆκες²⁴⁵
σφηκυὴν πτάμενοι ἀσκαυλοῖσιν ταχέεσσι
καὶ μεγάλῃ αὐλῇ δ' ἄρχων ἐδραῖος ἔνεσκεν
ἐν θρόνῳ ἀργυρέῳ δ' πεπηγμένος ἦν δαπέδοιο. (125)

²⁴⁴ = κρεμαστός.

²⁴⁵ cf. *Iliad* 12.167, 16.259.

Life inside has become sweet for you and us. The dogs fight the cats outside. You'll ask about the reason and origin for these things, won't you? It's difficult and long-winded to tell you all these things, so the best way is to tell the tale in full with an excellent feast. Come now, aliens, and we'll go to our city and our ruler's palace, for he wants to see you and fatten you up! We have brought you fast-moving bagpipes, for they are not useless things, but they are difficult to learn, and let's go to our ruler to take part in his excellent feast. "

So he spoke, and our dear hearts were persuaded. They gave each of us a bagpipe to fly to the city and the palace. We went there by flying, and curiosity possessed our souls, but not without weapons, as experience had taught us. For we had many excellent weapons in our pockets, the kind sci-fi writers call 'phasers'. Then we gazed at their ruler's palace suspended in the air, it was very well-built and resplendent. We boarded the house, as when wasps enter their nest, flying with swift bagpipes and in the great hall there was the ruler, sat on a silver throne, which was fastened to the floor.

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ'²⁴⁶ αἰδῶά γ' ἐδείξαμεν ἀνδρὶ ἄνακτι
 ἡμᾶς μὲν βασιλεὺς προσέφη πτεροέσσιν ἔπεσσι
 πάντα μάλ' εἰρωτων· τῷ γὰρ καὶ φρήζομεν αὐτοῖ
 – Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα –
 οὐτοί τις χρεΐη τὰ λαλοῦμενα πάντ' ἐπενίσπειν. (130)

Καὶ μετὰ ῥήματα πολλ' ἦγον megáρονδε δόμοιο
 ἀπτομένους κανῶνας²⁴⁷ ἐνὶ καταστεύμασιν²⁴⁸ οἴκου
 – εἰν ἀβάρει τούτῃ δ' ἦεν μέθοδος πρόοδοιο²⁴⁹ –
 ἄμμε μὲν αὖ καθίσαντο πεπηγμενέης κλισίῃσι
 δῶκαν καὶ βρώμην τε ποτήτατε δαιτὶ πάσασθαι (135)

ἄγγοις κεκρυφθέσσιν ὅπως μὴ πτήσας ἄνωδε
 βρώμην μὲν θρινάκεσσι ποτήτ' ἔλομέν γε σύριγξιν
 καὶ οἱ αὐτότοποι ἄνδρες σὺν ἄμμι δάσαντο.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ βρώμης τε ποτήτεος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο²⁵⁰
 ἦρξαν εἰρωτᾶν βασιλεὺς καὶ ἄνδρες ἀγαννοὶ (140)

οἵτινες νῦν εἴμεν καὶ ἄλλα πρήγματα πολλὰ
 ἀλλὰ τὰ τοῖς κατὰ κόσμων ἐγὼ πᾶσιν κατέλεξα
 πάντα μάλ' ἐξεΐης· τὰ μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε.
 Καὶ μὲν ἀμειβόμενος νῦν τοῦ βασιλῆος ἔρεινα
 τῶν περὶ πλανήτων κοίλων συζύγων στροφεόντων (145)
 καὶ περὶ τῶνδε κυνῶν καὶ αἰλούρων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

²⁴⁶ Křesadlo has written ἔπειτ' but this seems like a mistake given his common use of αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα (cf. *Astr.* 1.37, 1.150, 1.209, 2.60, etc.).

²⁴⁷ Lit. 'attached/fastened to the Canons', prime for a meta-literary reading of New vs. Old: in a world where everything is (literally) up in the air, it is the literary Canon that serves as a solid foundation; the literary tradition is a grounding force in the *Astronautilia*.

²⁴⁸ = κατάστεγος.

²⁴⁹ There's a pun here based on the polyptoton of ὁδός ('way/path'): μέθοδος (= μετὰ + ὁδός, 'following after'); πρόοδοιο (= πρό + ὁδός, 'going in front').

²⁵⁰ cf. Middle Liddell s.v. ἐξήμι I.1; *Iliad* 24.227, γόου ἐξ ἔρον εἴην.

But when we made a display of our respect towards their lord, the king addressed us in winged words, asking as about everything. And so we explained ourselves – Franta our universal-translator translated our words – but it's not necessary to describe all this chattering. And after many speeches, they led us to the palace's great hall, we were grasping onto the beams that lay all along the house's roof – this was their method for progressing along in their weightless state – then they sat us down on fastened couches and gave us food and drink to enjoy at a feast, in covered vessels so that they couldn't fly upwards. We took our food with forks and drinks with straws, and the natives dined with us. And now I asked the king in reply about the hollow planets, yoked together as they rotate, and about these dogs, cats, and men.

- Αὐτὰρ ἄναξ κόραμος μ' ἔπεσιν λέγεν εὐπτεροέσσι
 «Ὡ ξεῖν' εἰρωτᾶς ἀστρῶν κοίλων συζύγωμα
 καὶ τῶν αἰλούρων τε κυνῶν τε δαφνοῖνδ' αὐτμὴν
 ἡμῶν οἴκησιν γ' ἔνδον ἄστρος γλαθυροῖο. (150)
 Τοιγὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω· μήκιστα τὰ ῥήματα ἔσται.
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἀναγκαῖον σοι νῦν ἴσμεν περὶ πάντων
 ἅμμι δ' ἀλεξέμεναι· τοίνυν καταλέξω ἅπαντα.
 Ἦμεν φῦλα δύο ἀνθρώπων ναίομεν αὖτις
 ἄλλω εἰν πλάνη ἀλλήλοις ἐχθρὰ φέροντες (155)
 αἰὲν ἐν πόλεμοις ἑκατοντα ἐτηρίσι πολλῆς.
 Τέχνην καὶ γνώμην μὲν ἐχέσκομεν ὑποτέρην τῇ
 ἥπερ νῦν ἅμμι ἔστι λάθοντο δὲ πρήγματα πολλὰ
 λυγροῖς ἐν πόλεμοις γε κυσὶν σὺν καὶ γαλέησιν
 ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ προπάτωρες ἴσαν τεχνήματα πολλά. (160)
 Πλανήτη προτέρω δ' ἀλλήλοισιν πολέμησαν
 ὄπλοις πάμπολλοις ἑκατονταετηρίσι πολλῆς
 βῆδην²⁵¹ αἰσχροτέροις τεχνήμασιν ἡματα πάντα
 μέσφα δὲ τ' ἡ βόμβη ῥα πυρηνιακὴ ἐτέτυκτο.
 Καὶ τῇ βαλλόμενοι πλάνην βέβλαψαν ἅπαντα (165)
 ὥς οὔκ ὑπάρχειν εἰν ταύτῳ ζῶα δύναιτο
 οὐ βροτοὶ οὐ θῆρες οἰωνοὶ οὐ βοτάνητε.

²⁵¹ = βάδην.

Then their lordly ruler spoke to me in winged words:

“O alien, you’re asking me about the conjunction of the hollow astral bodies, and about the bloody scent of the cats and dogs, as well as about our own stay inside the empty planet. I shall tell you, but it will be a very long story. But it’s necessary for you to now know about it all and lend us help. I shall tell you everything in full. We used to be two tribes of men and lived on another planet, bearing hate against one another in constant warfare for many centuries. We had loftier technology and intelligence at that time than we have at present, and many things have been forgotten in the fatal wars with dogs and cats, but our ancestors knew many technical things. They fought with one another on our first planet with many kinds of weapons for many centuries, with the inventions becoming gradually more shameful every day, until the nuclear bomb was constructed. And having shot it at the planet they damaged everything so badly that no living thing could continue to exist on it, not mortal men, nor animals and birds, nor plants.”²⁵²

²⁵² One of the most notable sci-fi examples of humanity destroying itself through nuclear warfare is the twist of *Planet of the Apes* (1968), but this is a common sci-fi trope for discussing the Cold War.

- Ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ προπάτωρες ἴσαν τεχνήματα πολλὰ
 πυκνά τε καὶ θαυμαστά τὰ νῦν οὐκ ὕεες²⁵³ ἴσμεν.
 Αἶψα μὲν εἰρήνην ἀλλήλοισιν πεποίηκαν (170)
 σπονδὰς τέτμηκαν²⁵⁴ ἰδὲ καὶ καλὰ ὄρκια πιστὰ
 πάντες δ' ἐπτήσαντο νεησὶ μακρῇσι κενόνδε
 ὀμβριμοεργοῖσιν²⁵⁵ πυκὰ γὰρ τεχνήματα ἴσαν.
 Ἡέλιον δ' ἱκανὸν ζακενοῖο²⁵⁶ βάθεσσι λάβοντο
 τὸν πέρι πλανήτα πλαστῶ συζυγῶτε τέτευχαν (175)
 κρυπτήσιν τέχνῃσι· τὰ γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐλάθοντο
 ὕλης ἐκ ξείνης ἥπερ στερεώτερός ἐστι
 πάσης ὕλησιν γνωτῇσιν καὶ ἀδάμαντι
 αὐτῷ ὃς δέ τε ὑλάων στερεώτατος ἐστι
 πάσων οὐσίων συστήματι Μενδελειῖ²⁵⁷ (180)
 τούτου μὲν ὕλη πλάνοιν στερεώτερός ἐστι.
 Τὼ μὲν πλανήτα δ' ἄμφω κοίλῳ γε ποίησαν
 ἄφθονος εἵνεκα²⁵⁸ χῶρος ἔην πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν
 οἰκητήρεσι τοῖν πλάνοιν, ἀλλ' ἵς βαρύτητος
 ἴση τῷ πλάνῃ πρώτῳ ποδαπὼς ἀφίκοντο. (185)
 Πλανήτοιν κτίμενοιν ἤρξαν ζώην ἐπὶ ταῦτοιν
 καὶ εἴα πλανήτην οἶκον ἔλε λαὸς ἕκαστος,
 ἀλλὰ ἔσαν συζυγόντες ἕως σωλῇνι μεγίστῳ
 συμβόλῳ ὥς φίλοι ἦσαν· ἔην κτίσις ἄρτια μακρή.*

²⁵³ = νῖός.

²⁵⁴ cf. Middle Liddell s.v. τέμνω VII, "to bring to a decision".

²⁵⁵ cf. *Astr.* 1.5, 6.65.

²⁵⁶ (δια/ζα).

²⁵⁷ ὕλη is another meta-poetic marker, as is τέχνη, so there is room for another metaliterary reading around New vs. Old based on lost poetic skills (?)

²⁵⁸ Here = ὁθούνεκα = ὅτι/ὥς.

But our ancestors were familiar with many kinds of complex and wonderful technologies that we, their descendants, no longer know.²⁵⁹ They quickly made peace with one another, treaties they'd decided on, as well as fair trustworthy oaths. And everyone flew into the void on large ships of mighty construction, for they knew complex technologies. They detected a suitable sun in the depths of empty space, and around it they constructed two counterfeit planets yoked together by secret technologies, since we've forgotten them, it's made from an alien material which is harder than all known materials, including diamond, which is the hardest of all the materials that exist in the Mendeleev Table.²⁶⁰ The matter of these planets is harder than them. And they made both the planets hollow so that all the people who lived on the planets would feel no envy over land, but they also made the gravitational power be equal to the first planet that they had come from. They began to live on them once the two planets had been constructed, and each group of people chose a planet as their home, but they were yoked together like a great channel, so that it would be a symbol of their friendship, it's a long and perfect creation.

²⁵⁹ This kind of mass-loss of knowledge could be alluding to the 'Great Purge' of the intelligentsia by Stalin between 1936-38; this was a popular theme in Eastern European sci-fi, e.g., Arkady & Boris Strugatsky's *Hard to be a God* (1964).

²⁶⁰ i.e., the periodic table, which was invented by Dmitri Mendeleev.

Τῷδε ΦΙΛΟΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ συζυγώματι οὖνομ' ἔθηκαν. (190)

*Οἳ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀλλήλους ἠδὺ φίλησαν
ὕστεροι αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἤρξαν ἐχθρήματα φαίνειν
ἀλλήλοις· ἀρχαῖσα δ' ἔην νόμιμα πτόλεμοιο.*

*Ἄνδρες ἄρχοντες πόλεμους ψευδεῖς ἐποίησαν
ὥστ' ἀντιστάθμους αἰλούρων ἢ κυνῶντε (195)
οὕτως πείραζον σβέσσαι διψαν πολέμοιο.*

*Ἔθνος δ' ἔν ρα κύνας καὶ ἄλλον πέμπε γαλήας
εἰς πόλεμον καὶ ὥς μὲν ἔπαιζον ἀλλήλοισιν.
οἶσατο δ' ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἶναι φρόνιμόν τε καλόν τε
ἀλλ' ἰδὲ ὥς αἰὲν καὶ τοῦτ' ἀνηρες ἔβλαψαν. (200)*

*Αἰὲν κομψότερους ἄνδρες θῆρράς γε φύτευον
τὰς γαλλέας τε κῦνας τῆμος ἀνδράσσιν ἔοικαν
σωφροσύνη· τε δόλους πυκνοὺς ὕφαινον ἅπαντας²⁶¹
καὶ ρα φιλοπτολέμους τε ὑπὲρ μόρον²⁶² αἰνὰ μάχεσθαι
ὄπλοισιν δ' ὅπασαν πικροῖς καὶ κηροφόρουσιν. (205)*

*Οὕτως τετράφαται παιδιῇ εἰς πολέμονδε
πάγκοινον· οὗ σφας ἄνδρες κατέχειν ἐδύναντο
ἢ κύνας ἢ γαλέας χαλεπὸς χρόνος ἔσκεν ἐκάστω.
Εἰς τέλος αἴλουροί τε κύνες καὶ ἄμμι μάχοντο
πολλάκι νίκησαν ὥς γὰρ μάλα ἄγριοι ἦσαν, (210)
ὥς καὶ ἄνθρωποι ἔφυγον εἰς ἔντερα πλάνου.*

²⁶¹ cf. *Iliad* 6.187, *Odyssey* 5.356, 9.422.

²⁶² cf. *Iliad* 20.30, 21.517, *Odyssey* 1.34, 1.35, 5.436.

And they were appointed the name 'FRIENDLINESS' once they'd been yoked together. In the beginning they loved each other sweetly, but later on they then began to reveal their hatefulfulness to one another, because the customs of war are ancient. The men in charge brought pseudo-warfare into existence by counterpoising themselves with cats and dogs, thus did they attempt to quench their thirst for war. One race sent dogs and the other sent cats to war and so they played with one another like children.²⁶³ In the beginning it seemed to be sensible and noble, but men perverted it as always.²⁶⁴ Men would breed the animals to become ever smarter, then the cats and dogs resembled men in their soundness of mind, and would construct many kinds of complex stratagems, and they were bread to be fond of war so that they'd fight terribly beyond measure, and they granted them piercing weapons that also bring death. And so the childish game turned into an all-out war, and the men were unable to hold either the dogs or cats back, and each one had difficult time. In the end, the cats and dogs began fighting us as well, and they were often victorious since they were much fiercer, so mankind fled into the belly of the planet.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Warfare being reduced to a children's game.

²⁶⁴ Homily/sententia.

²⁶⁵ Mankind being forced to flee underground by human-like animals is the plot of *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970).

Καὶ μὲν ἐκεῖ ζῶμεν τεχνήμασι πάντα ἔχοντες
οἷατε δεῖ ἔχεμεν γ' ἀνθρώπους ἔργα βίοιο.
Ἥερα ἢ ἐφάος τε ὕδωρ καὶ ἄλλα τὰ πολλὰ
ὄσπρια καὶ λάχανον καὶ μῆλα τε καὶ ἔλικας βοῦς (215)

πάντα μάλ' οἷα δ' ἔοικε βροτοῖσιν βιοφορεύειν.
Ἀλλ' ἔνδον δ' ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔστιν ἱς βαρυτήτος
τοῦνεκα μηκότεροί εἰμεν καὶ λεπτότεροί τε
ζώων γηγενέων πάντες θῆρές τε καὶ ἄνδρες
οὐδ' ἄρα ἐν γυῖοις ἀλκή γ' ἔνεστί τε κῆκυς (220)

ἐξοτέρῳ πλάνῃ φοιτᾷν οὐ γὰρ σθένος ἔστί.
Ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν ἔνδον ζῶμεν ζώην περικαλλῆ
οἱ μὲν ῥ' ἐξότεροι γαλέαι τε κύνες τε μάχονται.»
Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς θαυμαστὸν δ' εἶσατο ἡμῖν.

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα ποτῆτα νέην κήρυκες ἔφυσσαν (225)

αἶψ' ἄνα τὸν μῦθον λάβε ἱρή ἱς²⁶⁶ βασιλῆος
«Εἴ γε κύνες ἀργοὶ οὐκ αἰλούροισι μάχοντο
ἄμμε κέν εἰν πλάνῃ εἰσβάλλειν ῥεῖα δύναντο
ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἀμφοτέρωι αἰὲν μεμαχωμένοι εἰσὶν
οὐκ αὖ σφιν καιρὸς τε λόγος καὶ ἄμμι μάχεσθαι (230)
ἀλλ' εἰ εἰρήνην γε ποιοῦν κύνες καὶ γαλέαι τε
ῥῆιδίως ἡμῖν κε σαφῆς ἦν αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.

²⁶⁶ cf. *Astr.* 3.256.

And we spend our lives here with our technologies, possessing everything that a man requires to have life's works: air, light, water, and many other things, such as fruits, vegetables, sheep, and cows with twisted horns, and all the things that are fitting for men in order to conduct their lives. But inside we feel no gravitational power which is why we are taller and thinner than you creatures born on Earth, including all animals and men. So our limbs don't have the strength and vigour, for we don't have the power to walk on the outside of the planet. But now we live our lives on the inside very finely, whilst the cats and dogs fight outside."

So the king spoke, and it seemed amazing to us. But when an attendant poured us another drink, the king's sacred power resumed the speech:

"If the swift dogs didn't fight the cats, then they could easily make an assault on us inside the planet, but since both are in perpetual battle they have no opportunity or reason to even attack us. But if the dogs and cats made peace, then clearly we could easily face utter destruction.

- Νῦν δ' αὖ κίνδυνος μέγας ἐστὶν ἐνδοβίοισιν.
 Ὁρσετό τίς γε κύων μετὰ τοῖς κυσὶ δεινομάχοισιν
 σῶφρων ἢ σοφός· προσηφής²⁶⁷ τοῖς τέτυκτο.* (235)
- Αὖ-βαῦ-γαῦ δέ τε μιν ἄλλοι καλέουσι κύωνες
 ἀλλὰ μιν ἄνθρωποι καλέουσιν Δημογέροντα
 [οὕτως μὲν μετέθηκε κυνὸς κλήσιν μεταθήτωρ
 γλώσση ἐνδοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἔπος ἔσκε περ ἄλλο].
 Ὅσδε θεοπροπέων μάντευται ἡματα πάντα* (240)
- αἰλούρους τε κύνας σπονδὰς τέμεναι καὶ ἔπειτα
 συγκάρτους τρυπάνειν πλάνου σκάφος καὶ στερεοῦ περ
 ἡμᾶς δ' εἰσβαίνειν κτάμεναι καὶ ἀνδροποδίξειν
 ὥς ὅτε δουλήσαι θηρέσσι κατοικοδόμοισιν
 τοῖς πρότεροις· νῦν δ' αὖτε θέλει ἄνδρας κυριεύειν.* (245)
- Ἄμμι δὲ πλοῦτος ἔνεστι ἄδην βρώμης τε ποτῆτος
 ἀλλὰ γε τοὶ πολεμιζόμενοι δ' ἔφθαρκαν ἅπαντα
 οὐκ ἄρα τις ἡμῖν προῆξις εἶην ἐπιβάσει
 ὥς πλέονες δ' ἡμῶν τε μάχην πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰσιν.
 Μίη μὲν βουλή ἡμῖν φάνε μυθομένουσι* (250)
- Δημογέροντα δὲ κακτάμεναι²⁶⁸ ξεῦζίν τοι ἀμῦναι.
 Ἄμμι γὰρ οὐ δύναμις εἶη τρώγων ἀναδύναι
 καὶ μὲν ἐκεῖ φοιτᾶν νῶτον πλάνου στερεοῖο
 δηρὸν δ' εἶν ἀβάρει περ ἐζήκαμεν²⁶⁹ οὔδε τε κῆκυσ
 γυῖοις ἡμέτεροις ἰδὲ καὶ σθένος ἀνδρὸσύνῃ τε.* (255)

²⁶⁷ = προφήτης, like with the Latin equivalent, *interpretes*, προφήτης is specifically an ‘*interpreter*’, a vessel for expounding the will of the gods, but the word can also describe one who interprets/translates between two groups, like Franta does; n.b. what Franta is doing, strictly speaking, is *interpreting*, not *translating*, cf. Feeney 2016:32, “*bluntly, interpreting is oral, and translating is textual*”.

²⁶⁸ = κτείνω, the perfect form isn’t found outside of compounds.

²⁶⁹ = perfect 1st pl active indicative form of ζάω.

But there is currently great danger for those who live inside. Some dog has risen up from the dogs that fight fearfully, he's temperate and wise, he's been made their prophet. And the other dogs called him Hau-bau-gau, but humans call him Demogeron²⁷⁰ [which is how the dog's translator translated it, but it meant something different in the language of the men who lived inside]. He divines the will of the gods every day, that cats and dogs will decide upon treaties and then pierce through the hull of the solid planet with their combined strength and come to slaughter us and tie the men by the foot so that they can enslave us to the formerly domestic animals. So now he wants to be lord over men. We're rich here with plenty of food and drink, but they've corrupted everything by making war, and making an assault is no solution for us, since they're more numerous than us and are much better in combat. A single plan revealed itself to us while we discussed, that Demogeron should be killed to ward off a conjoining of forces. For we didn't have the power to emerge from the holes and walk there on the surface of the hard planet, since we have lived for too long in a weightless state and our limbs have no strength or manly power.

²⁷⁰ Lit. 'elder of the common people'.

Ἄλλα κύνες τε καὶ αἵλουροι πυκινὰ φρονέοντες
 πληρέα μὲν ἀγορὴν θέμεναι μεμάσσι μεγίστης.
 Τοῖσιδε Δημογέρων μυθήσεται ὄρχαμος αὐτῶν.²⁷¹
 Εἴ τις μιν κτάμεναι ταύτης ἀγορῆς γε δύναιτο
 συμμαχίῃ γαλέων τε κυνῶν ἰδὲ οὗ κε γένοιτο. (260)

Ἀλλὰ γέ τις βῆσοι ἔξω κτάμεναι κύνα μάντιν
 ὑμῶν ἀλλοδαπῶν· ἡμεῖς τοι οὐ δυνάμεσθα.
 Εἴ κέν τις βάσει ἔξω κτάμεναι κύνα μάντιν –
 πολλὰ μὲν ἡμέτεροις οἴκοις κειμήλια κείται
 – ἢ δικαίως γε πόταται ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἴς βαρύτητος – (265)

ἄργυρος ἢ χρυσὸς καὶ ὁ πλατίνην καλέουσι –
 πολλὰ δὲ οἱ δώσω κειμήλια καὶ ἐτάροισιν
 ἀφνειοὺς πάντας γε ποιήσω οὗτι μεγαίρω
 ὥς οὐκ ἐσθλότερόν τε τιμήτερόν ἐστι βιωτοῦ.»
 Ὡ ἔρατ’· ἅμμες πάντες ἀκὴν γενόμεθα σιωπῇ. (270)

Ὅμβριμον ἦν ἔργον²⁷² καὶ δεινὸν ἔσοχον ἄλλων
 ἀλλὰ δὲ καὶ πλοῦτός γε ὠτρύνετο ἀνδροποιήτης.
 Εἰς τέλος ἦλθε δέ μοι μῦθος πραπίδεςσι πυκνήσιν.²⁷³
 Αὐτοὺς αὖθι μένειν εἰν δώμασι τρωγλοδυτῶν²⁷⁴
 ἔξω μὲν πέμψαι ρόβοτόν γε Ἴβωα μαχητὴν (275)

ἀνδρῶν πανδάματῳρα μέγαν καὶ ὅπλοφορευτὴν

²⁷¹ Very prevalent in Homer, but usually accompanied by ἀνδρῶν or λαῶν, not αὐτῶν, cf. *Iliad* 2.837, 6.99, 12.102, 17.12, *Odyssey* 3.400, 4.156, 10.538, 14.22 etc.

²⁷² cf. *Astr.* 1.5, 6.65, 6.173.

²⁷³ Πυκνός has previously been used to mean ‘complex’ and ‘well put together’.

²⁷⁴ Lit. ‘troglodytes’, a group of people commonly found in Classical geographic literature, cf. Herodotus *Histories* 4.183.

But the dogs and cats, with complex things in mind, eagerly trying to put on a forum that's full of importance.²⁷⁵ Demogeron will speak to them as their leader. If someone could slay him in that forum, then there would be no alliance between the cats and dogs. But one of you aliens should go out and kill the dog-prophet, since we are unable. If one of you could go out and kill the dog prophet – there are many treasures lying in our homes – or, to be exact, they're hovering since there is no gravitational force²⁷⁶ – silver and gold and what they call platinum – I shall give him many treasures as well as to his companions, I shall make them all wealthy, I feel no envy because there is nothing finer and more precious than life.”²⁷⁷

So he spoke, and we all silently became quiet. The work was mighty and terrible, eminent above the rest, but wealth also encouraged us to make ourselves manly. In the end, an unspoken thought entered my cunning mind. That I should stay right here myself amongst the homes of the cave dwellers, and send the battle robot Ivo outside, the weaponised subduer of all men,

²⁷⁵ I'm a little unsure on how to properly fit in μεγίστης, πλήρης takes a genitive so they are likely going together; cf. LSJ s.v. μέγας A.II.4, “weighty, important”, i.e., ‘full of importance’ (?).

²⁷⁶ An aside within an aside, Křesadlo often seems to have the need to qualify or nuance formulaic expressions, cf. Weise 2024:271 on Křesadlo’s “*Verfremdungseffekt* (‘alienation effect’)”.

²⁷⁷ Homily/sententia.

τῷ δε τύπῳ τὸν μὲν *ΡΟΒΟΚΟΠ* κλῆσιν καλέουσι
 καὶ ὃ γε δυσγενέων πλάνη ἐσάωσεν ἅπαντας.
 Τῷ μὲν Ἴβῳ ὄνομ' ἔσκεν ἐπεὶ ῥα σιδήρεος ἦεν.²⁷⁸
 Τοῦτο δὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ εἶπον· γήθησέ τε θυμῷ. (280)
 Εἵπέ γε νῦν μῖνεν πρὶν θηρία ἀθροισθῆναι
 οἷσι δόμοις ἐσθλοῖς πίνοντας ἢ καὶ ἔδοντας
 ἄλλως τερπομένους ὡς ἄνδρες ἐνδοβίοντες
 παμπόλλας ξενίσει· ἐφίλησαν ἥματα πάντα
 αἰὲν σφιν κίθαρίς γε φίλη μέλος ἢ χοροὶ τε (285)
 φάρμακα ὀλβοφοροῦντα τε κύπριδος ἔργα θεαίνης
 συλλήβδην ἰδὲ μὴ κρυπτῶς ὡς ἦθος ἔεσκεν
 ἀνδράσιν ἱππίροισιν²⁷⁹ οἳ εἰν Γαίῃ τετύκοντο
 ἀρχαίοις λυκάβησιν ἐεικοστῇ ἐπόχῃ περ
 ἡὔθ' ἐκατονταετηρὶν ἐπὶ κλῆσιν καλέουσιν (290)
 τοῖσιν ἱππίοις ἴσοι ἔσαν ἐνδοβίοντες
 ἦθει· ἦσαν ἐκεῖ πολλαὶ καλαὶ τε γυναικες
 ἐσθλαὶ καὶ μακραὶ καὶ πρόφρονες ἄμμι ὀδίταις
 ἀλλ' ἄβαρος χώρης γὰρ ἔασατο σχήματα πολλὰ
 ἀθροά· τοῦ λοιποῦ κάτω δ' οὐ λέξαιμι ἕκαστα (295)
 Κύπριδος ἡδία ἔργα σαφῶς· μάλα αἰδεόμαι γάρ.
 Οὕτως τερπόμενοι μένομεν ἀγορὴν ἄνα θηρῶν.
 Οἱ μὲν αἴλουροι ἕτερον πλάνην περ ἔναιον
 τοῖν γε δύοιν· ἀργοὶ τε κύνες τὸν ἡμέτερόν τε.

²⁷⁸ cf. *Astr*: 5.356, Weise (2024:276-7) says that the robot Ivo is named after Ivo Železný, Křesadlo's publisher, and is called σιδήρεος ('made of iron') because Ivo's surname 'Železný' also means 'made of iron'.

²⁷⁹ ἱππίρος, -ου, ὁ: Křesadlo's coinage for 'hippy', formed from the Czech "hippíř".

the type that are referred to by the name ROBOCOP, and who saved us all on the planet of the degenerates. His name was Ivo since he was made of iron. I told the king this, and he rejoiced in his heart. He told us now to stay behind until the animals had gathered together, so we drank and ate in their noble homes, and enjoyed ourselves in other ways since the men who live inside are fond of entertaining guests in all sorts of every time. They always have love for the cithara and lyric poetry and dancing, as well as happiness-inducing drugs and the works of the Cyprian goddess,²⁸⁰ as a collective group, not hidden away, as is the custom for hippies who existed on Earth in ancient times in the twentieth epoch, which is also referred to as a 'century'. The men who lived inside were identical to these hippies in character. There were many beautiful women there, they were noble and tall and gracious to us travellers, but the weightlessness of the land allowed many appearances as a collective group. Concerning the rest, I shall not tell you each of the Cyprian's pleasant works in detail, for I am very ashamed. And so we awaited the animals' forum in good cheer. The cats lived on the other planet of the two, and the swift dogs on our one.

²⁸⁰ i.e., Aphrodite; I find it interesting that she is referred to here by her connection to a land that is specific to Earth.

Τὸ γὰρ πλανήτα ἄμφω δ' εἶτον συζυγόντε (300)
 μοχλῷ θεσπεσίῳ καὶ ὑπερμεγεῖ τοῦτό τε μῆκος
 πισσυράκοντά τε καὶ πίσυρές τοι χιλιάδες ἦν
 καὶ ἔτι χιλιάδος γε τὸ ἥμισυ αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 ἔν' ἑκατὸν ἰδὲ καὶ γὰρ εἰκοσι χιλομέτρα
 ὥς περ καὶ ζάστημα²⁸¹ Σελήνης ἐστ' ἀπὸ Γαίης. (305)
 Τούτῳ μὲν μοχλῷ πλανήτ' εἶτον συζυγόντε
 θαῦμα μέγα στροφοοῦντέ τε χάρματα ἀστρονόμοισιν.
 Καὶ ἐνὶ τῷ μοχλῷ μὲν ἀνελκεστήρες²⁸² ἔησαν
 ἐσθλοὶ καὶ ἀραρόντες ἰδίῃσιν πραπίδεσσι
 ἀνδρῶν πρωπατόρων· τεχνήματα πυκνὰ καὶ ἐσθλά. (310)
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ τούτων κάτα γὰρ λέξαιμι ἕκαστα
 τεχνάων· χαλεπὸς δὲ λόγος καὶ δηρὸν ἐνίσπειν.
 οἱ μὲν ἀνελκεστήρες ἴσαν τάχα οὐ βραδέως περ
 ἥως εἰν ὥρη δ' ὀγδήκοτα χιλιομέτρα
 ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς ἕτερον πλάνην ὁδὸς εὖρ' ἓνα μῆνα (315)
 καὶ μὲν αἴλουροί γε πορεύοντ' εἰς κύνας ἀγροῦς.
 Οὕτως τερπόμενοι μένεμεν ἀγορὴν ἄνα θηρῶν.
 Ἀλλ' ἔπειτ' οὖν ἤγερθεν ὀμηγερέες τε γέγοντο
 αἴλουροί τε κύνες καὶ ἥρξαν βουλοφορεύειν²⁸³
 (εἶχομεν αἰθητῆρας ἐκεῖ σκοπέοντας ἅπαντα) (320)
 τῆμος τὸν ρόβοτον Ἴβω εἰς νῶτον ἔπεμψα
 μάντιν Δημογέροντ' αἰνοῖς φεῖσροισι ἐναρίζειν.

²⁸¹ (δια/ζα).

²⁸² Modelled on the modern Greek word for 'elevator',
 ανελκυστήρας.

²⁸³ = βουλεύω.

Both the planets are yoked together by an immense bar that's oversized and long, it was forty-four thousand, plus another half-thousand again, and then one hundred and twenty kilometres,²⁸⁴ as is the distance of the Moon from the Earth. The planets are yoked together by this bar, and it was a wonder to the astronomers that they rotated very gracefully. And in the bar, there were elevators that were fine and constructed by the individual minds of our ancestors. The technologies are complex and noble. But I shouldn't tell you everything about this device, since it's a difficult and lengthy story to tell. The elevators move quickly, not slowly, at 80 kilometres per hour, and the journey from one planet to the other takes one month. The cats are conveyed towards the swift dogs. And so we awaited the animals' forum in good cheer. But when they gathered and formed an assembly, the cats and dogs both began to deliberate (we had sensors there that saw everything), then I sent the robot Ivo to the surface to slay the prophet Demogeron in battle with his terrible phasers.

²⁸⁴ i.e., 404, 620 km, which is 27 km longer than the smallest *apogee* (the furthest distance between the Earth and Moon) which is 404,593 km; n.b., I have taken 'forty-four' to mean 404 not 44, like how people say 'twenty twelve' to mean 2012 not 32.

Ἔπατο μὲν ὥς ὄρνις ἄνω ποτὶ θώρακα πλάνου
 ἀσκαυλοῖο λάβων· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἦν ἱς βαρύτητος.
 Ἀλλ' ἦμος τρώγλην ἔξω τέχνημα ἀνοίγνυ (325)
 ἄψ πέσεν εἰς μέσου ἔνδον ἐπεὶ ἔλεν ἱς βαρύτητος
 τοὺς δε νομοὺς κάτα τῶν φυσικῶν· γελόωντο δ' ἐταῖρα
 Κλίμακα οἱ μακρὴν ἄνδρες πόρον ἐνδοβίοντες
 εἰς τέλος καὶ ἀνέδνυ καὶ βῆ δ' ἵμεν τὴν ἀγορήνδε
 ἡμεῖς ἔνδον ἐόντες ὁράματα εἰσορόωμεν (330)
 αἰσθητήρεσσιν δ' ὥς τηλοορήματι καινῶ.
 Οἱ μὲν αἴλουροί τε κύνες νῦν ἄθροοι ἦσαν
 αὐλῇ δ' εἰν μεγάλη· ἥδ' ἦν ὥς ἀμφιθέητρον
 πάμπολλοι· πάντες καὶ σώφρονες ὥς ἄνθρωποι.
 Τοῖσι δὲ μύθῳ ἦρχε κύων μέγας καὶ λάσιός τε (335)
 Δημογέρων μεγάλη φωνῇ· τέχνη δὲ ποίησεν.
[ἡμῖν λευσομένοισι²⁸⁵ μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε]
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ τούτων κάτα γὰρ λέξαιμι τὰ πάντα
 μύθων εἰπομένων ἠνωχλήσαιο δὲ πάντα.

²⁸⁵ = λεύσσω.

He flew like a bird up to the outer wall of the planet, taking a bagpipe with him, since there's no gravitational force. But when the machine emerged outside the hole, it fell back into the middle because the power of gravity seized it and followed the laws of physics. My companions laughed. The men who live inside gave him a long ladder as a means of getting out, and eventually he got to the top and went to go to the forum, we, however, were inside gazing steadily upon the spectacle using our newly produced television's sensors. The cats and dogs were now in a crowd in a large courtyard which was in many ways like an amphitheatre. And all of them were of sound mind, like humans. The great and hairy dog Demogeron began telling them a speech in a mighty voice, and he did it skilfully [our translator translated it for us as we watched]. But I won't tell you about all the words he said, since that would annoy everyone.

- Ἦρξε δὲ Δημογέρων περὶ εἰρήνης κατάλεξαι (340)
καὶ τε φιλοφροσύνης αἰλούρων ἢ κυνῶν τε
ὥς καὶ ἀμφοτέρω θῆρες ἀρπακτοὶ ἔασιν
τάξεος ἐκ μούνης εἰ περ ἑτέροισι γένεσσιν
ἐχθρὸν κοινὸν ἔχοντες ἐνὶ πλάνοιο βάθεσσιν
τὸν μὲν ἄνθρωπὸν περ ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέουσι. (345)
τούς γε συνίστασθαι περ ἔοικεν καὶ συζύγους τε
ἀνθρώποισι ἐπιστρεφείν καὶ ἱφὶ μάχεσθαι
τοῦ δ' αὖ οὐδὲ κύνες οὐδ' αἴλουροι περ ἄκουσαν
ἀλλὰ μὲν ἐπὶ προδότῃ ἀργοὶ κύνες ἐξονόμασαν
ἀ γὰρ δ' αἴλουροι ἐχθρὸν γένος γαλεάων. (350)
Τοῦ καὶ ἐπεσσύμενοι μάντει κτάνον καὶ σκύλασάν²⁸⁶ μιν.
Οἶδ' ἀλλήλοισιν νῦν ἦρξαν ἱφὶ μάχεσθαι
αἴλουροί τε κύνες φείσοισιν κηροφόροισιν.
Βλήμενοι ἐξαπίνης διεφήναντ' ἡϋτ' ὁμίχλῃ
καὶ μὲν ἄφαντοι ἔφυν θῆρες καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκον. (355)
Ἦν δὲ μάχῃ μεγάλη ἵλαος μέγας ἀνθρώποισιν
αὐτοτόποις· πολέες γὰρ θῆρες γ' ἄθροοι ἦσαν
πάμπολεες ὀλεκοντ'²⁸⁷ αἴλουροι ἢ κύνες τε
οἱ μὲν εἰρήνης ἕνεκεν ἀγορηνδε ἴκοντο.
Αἰὲν ἦδε φύσις ἰσχυροτέρ' ἐστὶ νόοιο. (360)

²⁸⁶ = σκυλεύω (?)

²⁸⁷ = ὀλέκω.

Demogeron began to talk in detail about peace and friendliness between cats and dogs, since both animals have been unsuccessful, and are from the same order even if they belong to different races, possessing a common enemy in the depths of the planet that they call 'humanity'. It seemed necessary for them to band together and to turn on mankind and fight them as a united group. But neither the dogs nor the cats would listen to him, instead the swift dogs called him a traitor, and the cats called him an enemy of the feline race. And rushing upon him they killed the prophet and despoiled his body. And now the cats and dogs began fighting each other fiercely with death-inflicting phasers. Those who'd been shot suddenly became transparent like a mist and then the animals disappeared and no longer existed. There was a mighty battle that was very propitious to the native humans, since many animals were gathered together, and many cats and dogs perished even though they had come to the forum for the sake of peace. Thus nature is always stronger than reason.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ Homily/sententia.

Γηθόσυνος ρόβοτον εἰς ἔνδου αἶψ' ἐκάλησα
 καὶ ἡμῖν βασιλεύς δῶκεν κειμήλια πολλὰ
 ὥς ὑποδέξατο πρὶν καὶ κεν αὐτοὶ ὀλέκοντο
 Νῦν μὲν ἐγὼ πλῶσαί γε θέλον τὸν ἀπείρονα κόσμον
 ὥς περ ὀφειλὴ γ' ἔσκεν ἐμοὶ ἰδὲ καὶ ἐτάροισιν (365)
 ἀλλ' οὐ τοῖς ἔταροις τὸ πορεύειν ἦνδανε θυμῷ
 ἀλλ' ἔθελον μῖμνειν σὺν ἀνδράσι αὐτοτόποισιν
 φάρμακα πινέμεναι καὶ πράσσειν ἔργα ἔρωτος
 συλλήβδης ἀβάρει πορνεύειν σχήμασι πᾶσιν
 οὔτι περ ἐργάζειν· τά σφιν φάνε ὥς παράδεισος. (370)
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σὺν τοῖς κόραμοῖς σφισι μῆτιν ὕφηνα.
 Μεθυσθεῖς²⁸⁹ ἐτάρους ἀσκεύμασι²⁹⁰ εὐφορέουσιν
 εὐδοντας εἰς νῆα φέρον ἀεκητὶ ἅπαντας
 αὐτὰρ ἔτ' ὠτρυνον²⁹¹ ρόβοτον κυβερνητῆρα
 εἰς ζακενὸν²⁹² πλώειν τῷ ῥηϊδίως ἐπίτελλον. (375)
 Οἱ μὲν αὐτοτόποι τρώγλην σκάφεος μοι ἀνοίγνυν.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμων ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες.
 Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν. (380)

²⁸⁹ = μεθυσθεῖς.

²⁹⁰ = ἄκεσμα.

²⁹¹ = ὠτρύνω.

²⁹² (δια/ζα).

And I joyfully called the robot back inside and the king gave us many treasures as he'd previously promised and could have perished themselves. Now I wanted to set sail into the infinite cosmos since my companions and I both had a debt to pay, but sailing was no longer pleasant to my companions' minds, they wanted to remain instead with the native people so that they could drink their drugs and do erotic deeds in weightless groups so they could fornicate in all sorts of ways and not work. It seemed like a paradise to them. But I contrived a plan for them along with the rulers. After making my companions drunk with euphoric drugs, I brought them all onto the ship as they slept and against their will, but I stirred up the robot to be the pilot and ordered him to quickly sail into the void. And the natives opened up a hole in the hull for me. The rocket propelled the beautifully-constructed ship at once, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind us. From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

Book H

[Τὰ περὶ τῶν κοσμοβιόντων. Οὐδενὸς ἀριστεία]

Πόρρῳ μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
[Μανδὸν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν]
οἰοπόλοι²⁹³ ζακενοῦ²⁹⁴. οὐδ' ἄλλος φαίνεται πλάνης
ἀλλὰ μέλαν μέγα χάσμα καὶ ἀστέρα τηλεορῶντα
μοῦνος πλοίαρχος πὲρ ἐγρηγόρη ἀστροπορεύων (5)
ἄλλοι μοι ἔταροί εὐδον εἰν κόματ' ἕκαστος
νῆα δὲ μοι ρόβοτός γε κυβερνήτης ἴθυνεν.
Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἔταροι ἤγερθεν κόματος ἔξω
πρῶτα δὲ θαυμάζοντό τι συγκύρσαιτο²⁹⁵ γένεσθαι
ἀλλὰ δ' ἔπειτ' ἔγνωσαν ἐμοὶ ἔριδα προφέρεςκον. (10)
Ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπέεσσιν ἔνεικον λοιδορέοισιν
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ φείσρους λυγροὺς κάψης ἐρίσαντες
μοὶ στάσιν ἐστασίησαν ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἦνδανε θυμῷ.
Τοῖσιν μὲν στασιώτησιν φῶς ἡγεμόνευεν
τὸν *Κύπτην*²⁹⁶ ἔταροι μὲν ἐπὶ κλήσιν καλέοντο (15)
ὅς μοι ὀρεγνὺς φεῖσρον ἔπος τ' ἐφατ' ἕκ τ' ὀνόμαζε·

²⁹³ Usually means 'lonely', but can also mean 'tending sheep; traversed by sheep', the verb οἰοπολέω also means 'roam alone; to tend sheep, to roam the mountains'; a fitting noun then for a search for a sheep by quasi-shepherds. **Pastoral.**

²⁹⁴ (δια/ζα).

²⁹⁵ = aor. opt. συγκυρέω.

²⁹⁶ I can't find much information about this name, but it seems to be connected to the verb 'to boil' in Czech (cf. ESSČ s.v. *kypěti* 1), which would be fitting for a character involved in a mutiny (i.e., a boiling over).

Book 7

[The events concerning the cosmobionts.²⁹⁷ Oudeis' finest hour²⁹⁸]

We sailed onwards through the depths of the empty universe [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe], wandering alone in the abyss. No other planet appeared apart from the great black chasm and far-seen stars. Only I, the ship's captain, was awake during the voyage through the stars, my other companions were each sleeping in a deep slumber, but the robot was steering the ship for me as pilot. But when my companions woke up from their deep sleep, they wondered at first what could've happened to them, then they presented me with their contention once they'd found out. In the beginning they spoke to me in abusive words, but then they drew out their deadly phasers from their pockets and mutinied against me in revolution since their hearts didn't find what I'd done acceptable. A man led the way for the mutineers, whom my companions referred to as Kypta, who pointed his phaser at me and uttered the following speech loudly:

²⁹⁷ Lit. 'creatures of the universe'.

²⁹⁸ An 'aristeia' (lit. 'excellence') is typically a battle scene in an epic which showcases an individual hero's prowess; very prevalent in the *Iliad*.

«Τέθναθι Οὐδείς ἄρχον ἢ ἡμῖν νῆα κυβέρνα
 ἄψ πρὸς πλανήτην ταῦτον τὸν λείψαμεν ἄνδρες
 ὑστάτιον· μάλα γὰρ ἡμῖν ὅς γ' ἦνδανε θυμῷ
 δαίτες καὶ κίθαρίς τε χοροὶ καὶ ἔργα ἐρώτων. (20)

Χρήματα νῦν ἡμῖν πᾶσιν κειμήλια κεῖται
 πλούσιοί εἰμεν πάντες ἀτὰρ εἰν χάσματι κόσμου.
 Βουλὴν οὐκ ἔχομεν πλανᾶν κόσμοιο βάθεσιν
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἀλλὰ τόπου μίμνειν γε καλοῦ ζωῇ τε πάσασθαι.²⁹⁹» (25)

Ὡς φάτο· μοί γε μένος περ ἔλε φρένα καὶ κραδίην τε
 ἀλλ' οὔ μοί τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο πῶς ὑπαλῦξαι³⁰⁰
 ἄψ ἀέκων μὲν τρέψα καλὴν εὐεργάα νῆα
 καὶ ποτὶ τὸν πλάνην αἰλούρων ἠὲ κυνῶν τε
 τῷ ναῖον ἀβάρει ἔνδον γ' ἄνδρες τε γυναῖκες (30)
 δίπλακα τόνδε Φιλοφροσύνην ψευδῶς καλέουσιν.

Οὕτως μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 οἳ τοι γηθοσύνοι καὶ ἐγὼ κακὰ βυσσοδομεύων.
 Αὐτίκα νῆα καλὴν ἐτάραξέ τε καὶ τρόμος εἶλεν
 οὔδ' ἔτι ρῆϊδίως πλώειν δύνατ' ὥς πρὶν εἴωθεν (35)
 ἀλλὰ δέ τις ἷς μιν κατερύκειν φαῖνε κελεύθου.
 Ἥμεῖς εἰς πρύμνην μὲν ὀρέξαμεν αἰσθητῆρας
 καὶ νῦν βλέψαντας δ' ἔ φόβος ἔλε καὶ τρόμος αἰνός.

²⁹⁹ = πατέομαι.

³⁰⁰ = ὑπαλύσκω, cf. *Iliad* 11.451, 12.327, *Odyssey* 4.512, 5.430, 8.355, 19.189.

“Die, commander Oudeis, or pilot our ship back to that planet which we men have abandoned for the last time, for it pleased our hearts greatly, the feasts, the cithara, the dances, as well as the erotic deeds. We’ve currently got money and treasures in store for us, we’re all rich, but in the abysses of the cosmos. We have no will to wander through the depths of the cosmos in search of Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe, but rather to stay in a beautiful place and enjoy life.”

So he spoke, and passion seized my mind and heart, but no solution for how to escape revealed itself to me at all. Unwillingly I turned the beautiful, well-constructed ship back towards the planet of the cats and dogs, inside which men and women live in a weightless state; towards this double planet that they deceptively call ‘Friendliness’. And so we sailed through the depths of the empty universe, they rejoiced while I was planning evil things in the depths of my soul. Immediately a tremor caused confusion and captured the beautiful ship, nor could she sail easily like she was previously accustomed, but some power seemed to be holding her back from going onwards. We aimed our sensors towards the stern and, having now seen her, we were seized by fear and terrible trembling.

- Οὐνεκα κοσμοβίων ἡμῖν σχέτο νῆα μέλαιναν.
 Σὺ νῦν εἰρωτᾷς ἀναγνῶστα³⁰¹ ἢ φύσις εἶη. (40)
 Τοι γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω κατὰ κόσμον ὡς ἐπέοικεν·
 Ἔστι δὲ κοσμοβίων ζῶον κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν
 οὐπερ πλανήτη ζῶόν τι· ἀλλ' ἀνέδην τε
 πλεῖται εἰν ζακενῶ³⁰² ὡς ἡμῶν ἡὔτε νῆες.
 Τούτῳ μὲν σκάφος ἐστ' ἰσχυρὸν ῥωμαλέον τε (45)
 ὥς τοι χῳρίζειν μιν ἀπὸ ψύχρους ζακενοῖο
 διαφανές τε μέρει ὡς αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο
 – ὅστις περ μὲν ἐνείη ἐνὶ συστήματι θηρός –
 σῶμα ἀφίκνεῖσθαι ἀγγεῖον χλωροφυλλῆς
 σὺν βιοτιθεμέναι πλεῖστον σάχαρόν τ' ἄμυλόν τε (50)
 ὡς Γαίης βοτάνη· τρόφιμον τάδε κοσμοβίοντι.
 Ἀλλὰ γέ χρεῖη καὶ ἀζώτον³⁰³ ἢ ὕδατός περ.
 Ταῦτα δὲ κοσμοβίων εὔρει ἀπὸ κοσμοβιόντων
 τῷ γ' αὐτῷ πολλοὶ τε πολύστροφοί³⁰⁴ εἰσιν ἅπαντες
 μικροὶ καὶ μεγάλοι ἀλλήλους βεβρώθοντες. (55)
 Οἱ μὲν κοσμοβιόντες ἐλαύνονται ἐνὶ κόσμῳ

³⁰¹ Apostrophe to the reader; an ἀναγνώστης is lit. a 'reader' (from the verb ἀναγινώσκω), but it also describes an educated slave who has been trained to read (cf. Plutarch *Lives*: *Crassus* 2.544, Cicero *Letters to Atticus* 1.12.4, Cicero *Letters to Friends* 255.2, Cicero *Pro Sestio* 110.12, Cornelius Nepos *Vitae*: *Atticus* 13.3.3, 14.1.1), cf. Butler 2015 *The Ancient Phonograph*; the verb ἀναγινώσκω often means 'recognise, know well', so ἀναγνώστης could be instead translated as 'my recogniser; one who knows me well', which could suggest some sort of literary game.

³⁰² (δια/ζα).

³⁰³ cf. note for *Astr.* 4.106.

³⁰⁴ Lit. 'much turned', i.e., could be equated with πολύτροπος, Odysseus' epithet.

Because a cosmobion had clung to our black ship. Now you, reader, might be asking what her nature is. For I will tell you in order, as is proper. A cosmobion is a creature that belongs to the depths of the universe, it doesn't live on any planet but sails without constraint in the abyss like our ships.³⁰⁵ It has a strong and robust hull so that it can separate itself from the coldness of the abyss,³⁰⁶ and it is partly transparent so that the rays of the sun – which are precisely what's present in the composition of the animal – can come inside its body, which also contains reservoir of chlorophyll, as well as producing more sugar and starch through photosynthesis like earthly plants. This is the cosmobiont's source of nourishment. But it needs Nitrogen and water. The cosmobion obtains these things from cosmobionts, who all come in many manifold forms, both small and large and eat one another. The cosmobionts are propelled through the cosmos

³⁰⁵ i.e., a cosmobion is the space equivalent of a sea creature, if planets are also equated to islands (cf. the four-dimensional space whale in *Futurama* season 6 episode 15, “*Möbius Dick*”); a female sea(/space) monster immediately brings Scylla or Charybdis to mind.

³⁰⁶ Since the cosmobion is presented in ship-like terms (complete with a ‘hull’), then this description can be open to a meta-poetic reading, namely to the ship-as-poem analogy commonly found in Classical literature; the word for ‘coldness’, ψυχρός, is also a Classical used term in literary criticism for ‘lifeless/silly’ works of literature (e.g., Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 13.580a, Aristophanes *Frogs* 119, 125); the cosmobion/poem defines itself in opposition to poor literature.

- ἴονες³⁰⁷ ἐκ πρῶκτοιο ἀήρια σφόδρα μάλιστα
 ταῦτη περ μεθόδῳ πλῆσαν κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα γινώριμόν ἐστί τι ζῶον κοσμοβιόντων
 κεῖται εἰν βάθρῳ τῆς πυραμιδὸς τροφοδωτῆς (60)
 ~ ἄζότου ὡς ἀρχιδοτήρ· αἶνιγμα μὲν ἐστί.
 Τούτων μὲν ζῶων ἐν ἔπεσχεν νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 καὶ μέγα θηρίον ἦν μεῖζον πλοίοι' ἄντοϊο³⁰⁸
 ἡμῖν σκεπτομένοισι κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ.
 Τῷ μὲν προυβοσκῖς μεγάλη ἦν κοσμοβίοντι (65)
 μακρὴ καὶ στερεὴ καὶ τῇ τρυπᾷ θέλε νηὸς
 τὸ σκάφος ἡὲ κιτῶνα³⁰⁹ καὶ ἄμμιν κῆρα φέρεσθαι.
 Αὐτίκα τοὺς ἐτάρους λέλιπεν μένος καὶ στάσις αὐτῇ
 ἀλλὰ τε γουνόμενοι αὐ' ἐμεῦ νῦν χεῖρας ἱαλλον
 βουλὴν ζητοῦντές τε διάγνωσίν τ' ἐπίταγμα. (70)
 Οὕτως χεῖρονες ἄνδρες αἰεὶ ἐσθλοῖο δέονται
 ἀρχομένου εἵκεν συνκύρση³¹⁰ δεινότερόν τι.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ρόβοτον πρῶτον κτάμεναί μιν ἔπεμψα.
 Αὐτίκ' Ἴβω ρόβοτος ἐκ νηὸς ἄλτο κελαινῆς.
 Ἀλλὰ πρὶν γε δύναιτο βάλειν τὸν κοσμοβίοντα (75)
 φείσρῳ λυγροφόρῳ ὁ βίων καυλὸν³¹¹ κατέαξεν
 τῷ ρόβοτος Ἴβω πλοίοιο δεδημένος ἔσκεν
 καὶ ρόβοτον κόψας πέμψεν κόσμονδε κενόνδε.

³⁰⁷ obscure, possibly from ἵμι (?)

³⁰⁸ ἄντος = εὖρος.

³⁰⁹ = χιτών.

³¹⁰ = συγκυρέω.

³¹¹ The image of a robot tied to a ship by a cord that is then severed could conjure the image of a baby's umbilical cord being cut, and this newborn image is continued by how the 'new-born' Ivo is slapped at the moment of his 'birth' like how doctors used to slap a baby's bottom to get it breathing.

by expelling air from its anus very violently: it's by this method that they sail the depths of the universe. It's not very well-known whether any of the cosmobionts is a living creature and lies at the bottom of a food pyramid ~ because they're producers of Nitrogen. It's puzzling. One of these creatures was holding onto our black ship and the great beast was bigger than the breadth of our vessel, our dear hearts shattered as we saw this. This cosmobion had a giant proboscis, long and firm, and he wanted to pierce our ship's hull and case with it, and bring death upon us. Rage and rebellion itself immediately abandoned my companions, instead they now threw their hands around me, clasping me by the knees in supplication, seeking my plan, decision, and orders. In this same manner do men who're less worthy always require a good man to be their ruler when something more terrible happens.³¹² So I first sent the robot to slay it, and the Robot Ivo immediately leapt from the black ship. But before he could shoot the cosmobion with his phaser that bears misery along with it, the creature broke the cable which the robot Ivo was tied to the ship by into pieces, and then with a knock it shot the robot into the empty cosmos.

³¹² Homily/sententia.

Ἔπατο εἰς ζακενὸν καὶ μικρότερός τε πέφυκεν
 πάντως συνεχέως καὶ ἐξίτηλος ἔτυκτο. (80)
 Ἡμεῖς σκεπτομένοι ὑαλήσαμεν³¹³ ἤυτε θῆρες
 ὡς Ἴβω ῥόβοτος διέφηνεν χάσματι κόσμου
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο φθεγγομένοισιν.
 Δεύτερον αὐτὶς ἔπεμψά γ' ἐγὼ Κύπτην στασιώτην
 ἔξω κσομοβίοντι μάχεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ ἔεσκεν (85)
 καρτερὸς εἰν πολέμοιο καὶ θαρσαλέος τ' ἀγαθός τε
 ἀλλὰ δέ μιν τίσεως³¹⁴ ἔνεκεν ἐκ νηὸς ἔπεμψα.
 Οὐ γὰρ Κύπτα τέτληκεν ἐμὸν μῦθόν γ' ἀπόθεσθαι
 ἀνάνδρος περ ἔων ἀλλ' αἶδετο πάντας ἐταίρους
 ἀλλὰ τὰ τεύχ' ἀνέδου περικαλλέα οἷα μὲν ἄνδρες (90)
 ναυτῆρες κόσμου ἔξω νηὸς φορέουσιν.
 “Σπεῖς σοῦτ” τὰ βρύθανες καλέουσιν ἀγριοφῶνοι³¹⁵
 ἀλλὰ μὲν οἱ ἔτεροι καλέουσιν καὶ σκαφοάνδρα.
 Τὸν μὲν ἔδου τρομέων θαλερὸν δ' ἀπομόρψατο δάκρυ.
 Βῆ δ' ἵμεν ἐκ πλοίοιο ἀτάρ γ' ὥς θῆρ ἐνόησεν (95)
 καυλὸν φωτὶ δάκων αὐτὸν κόψεν δ' ἀπὸ νηός.
 Ἔπατο εἰς ζακενὸν καὶ μικρότερός τε πέφυκεν
 πάντως συνεχέως καὶ ἐξίτηλος ἔτυκτο.

³¹³ Obscure, possibly from ὑαλόω (*‘to turn into glass’*), the Czech translates it as *‘bellows’*, which could be reached by interpreting *‘turning into glass’* to really mean *‘glassblowing’*, and then just *‘blowing’*, i.e., *‘bellowing (like a glassblower)’*.

³¹⁴ Recalls the arguments made against Odysseus for why he was the only one to return to Ithica from Troy.

³¹⁵ cf. *Odyssey* 8.294, describes the Sintians in Lemnos, where Ares and Aphrodite are caught by Hephaestus’ chains.

He flew into empty space and continually became smaller in every way and became faint. We howled like beasts when we saw this, since the robot Ivo had disappeared in the hollows of the universe, and no solution revealed itself to us at all as we called out. The second one then that I sent to fight the cosmobion outside was the mutineer Kypta, for he was not mighty in warfare or courageous and noble, but I sent him from the ship to get retribution. For Kypta did not dare to disregard my command, and he felt shame before all his companions since he was unmanly, so he put on the sort of very beautiful clothes that cosmonauts wear when they're outside the ship. The British call it a 'space suit' in their rough tongue,³¹⁶ but other men call it a 'scaphander'.³¹⁷ He put it on as he trembled, and a fresh tear took shape. He went to go from the ship, but when the beast noticed him, it knocked him from the ship after biting off the man's cable. He flew into empty space and continually became smaller in every way and became faint.

³¹⁶ It's worth remembering that Křesadlo lived in Colchester, Essex.

³¹⁷ Lit. from the modern Greek word for 'diving suit', σκάφανδρο.

- Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ἐτάρους προσέφην ἔπεσι πτεροέσσιν·
 «Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων³¹⁸ πάντες ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι. (100)
 Ὅστις μὲν τλείη ξεστῆς ἵμεναι ἀπὸ νηὸς
 ἔξω εἰς ζακενὸν κτάμεναι τὸν κοσμοβίοντα
 τούτῳ δ' αὖτις ἐγὼ δώσω κειμήλια πάντα
 ὅσσα δέ μοι ἔπορεν βασιλεὺς πλάνου γλαφυροῖο.
 Χρυσοῦ οὐ τιμάω – ναὶ γὰρ κυνικὸς σοφός εἰμι (105)
 ἀλλὰ μοι ἀσφαλέη νηὸς μὲν ἐπὶ φρεσὶ κεῖται
 ἥως πλοιάρχῳ ἰδὲ σωτηρία ἅπαντων.
 Ἀλλ' ἄγε· ὀρνύτω ὑμῶν φῶς ὅστις ἄριστος
 θῆρα κατακτάμεναι καὶ κτήματα πολλὰ δέχεσθαι.»
 Ὡ ἐφάμην· οἱ πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ (110)
 πολλοὶ δ' ἄνθρωποι εἰσιν παῦροι δέ τε ἄνδρες.
 Ἀλλὰ γε τοῦς ἐπίτελλον ἐμοὶ σκηφάνδρα ἐνέγκαι
 τὸν μὲν ἔνδυν κοτέων αἰσχυνόμενος γὰρ ἐταίρων
 καὶ μοί τις φεῖσρον λυγρὸν παλαμῆφιν ἔθηκεν
 ἀλλὰ γὰρ εἰν νώτῳ κίστην εὖτυκτον ἔθηκα (115)
 τῇ μὲν κινητῇ πυραυλοῖος δὲ κέκευθεν
 ἦ μὲν γ' εἰν ζακενῶ³¹⁹ ἐλάσαιοτό περ ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 τὴν ὁδὸν ἦν ἐθέλοισι· οὐ γὰρ καυλῶ γ' ἐπάνειχον.
 Βῆν ἵμεν εἰς νηὸς κίστην ἐκ τῆς γε ἵησιν
 εἰς ζακενόν· πολλὸν κραδίη δ' ἄσπαιρε³²⁰ κίνοντι. (120)

³¹⁸ cf. *Astr.* 3.47, 5.169, 5.399; cf. *Iliad* 11.184, 17.545; *Odyssey* 6.281, 20.31; Hesiod *Theogony* 761.

³¹⁹ (δῖα/ζα).

³²⁰ cf. *Iliad* 13.443.

Then I addressed my companions in winged words:

“Listen to my words, all you trusty companions. Whichever one of you dares to go from our polished ship outside into the emptiness of space to slay the cosmobion, I shall in turn give him all the treasures that the king of the hollow planet furnished me with. I count gold worthless – yes, because I’m a cynical scientist, it’s the safety of the ship as well as everyone’s wellbeing instead that hangs over my mind since I’m the ship’s captain. But come now, and let whoever’s the best man rise up and slay the beast and receive many treasures.”

So I spoke, and everyone silently became quiet, and there were many humans but few men. Then I ordered them to bring me a scaphander, which I put on begrudgingly because I was ashamed with my companions, and someone placed a deadly phaser in my hands. Then I put a well-made pack on my back, within which was contained a jet propellant that would propel me here and there in the vacuum of space whichever way I would want, so I didn’t hold on to a cable. I went to go to the ship’s stern from which they release people into empty space, and my heart throbbed and shook very hard.

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δ' ἄηρ' ἐκ τῆς κίστης συμφόνισαν³²¹
 καί μοι ἔπειτα θύρας βάθεος ζακενοῖο γ' ἀνοίγνυν,
 βῆν ἵμεν ἐκ νηὸς κτάμεναι τὸν κοσμοβίοντα.
 Ἦν γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον ὅτε θῆρ πλοῖον τρυπάνιζεν
 ῥάμφω σκληροτάτῳ τάχα κέν γε τόρησε χιτῶνα. (125)
 Τοῦτον δερκόμενον μέ ἔλε τρόμος ἀγλαὰ γυῖα
 ὥς θᾶσσον πετόμην· μάλα γὰρ μέγα θηρίον ἦεν,
 ἄλλὰ γε θαρβήσας³²² φεῖσρον πρὸς θῆρα ὄρεξα.
 Πρὶν μὲν σκανδαλέην πιέσαι ἐπ' ἐμοὶ δέ τ' ἔλαινεν
 καὶ κόψας πέμψεν παμένον κόσμονδε κενόνδε (130)
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἦρξας πύραυλον κιστοφορεντὴν
 ἦλθον ἐλαυνόμενός γε πάλιν πρὸς νῆα μέλαιναν.
 Ἀλλὰ γε πρὶν πείσαι με δ' ἔπειτα πέλωρ βάλε ῥάμφω
 καὶ μὲν ἐπεὶ δνοφέρων κόσμονδε κενόνδε μ' ἔπεμψε.
 Τρὶς³²³ κτάμεναι μεμαῶς φεῖσρον πρὸς θῆρα ὄρεξα (135)
 τρὶς κόψας ἀπόπεμψε βάθος κόσμου ζακενόνδε
 τρὶς περ ἐγὼ νόστησα ἐλαυνόμενος δ' ὑπὸ κίστης
 οὐδ' ἦν ῥηϊδίον βαλέμεν ζακενοῖο πέλωρον
 ~ εἴ κεν ἀμαρτήσαιμ' ὀλεσαιμί γε νῆα μέλαιναν³²⁴ ~
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ τὸ τέταρτον ἐγὼ νόστησα μάχεσθαι (140)
 ἴφι ἐλαυνόμενος κίστη πυραυλοφόροιο
 κοσμοβίοντα βάλλον φείσρου ἀνγῆς ὀλοῇσιν.

³²¹ Most likely from σιφωνίζω.

³²² Obscure, possibly a combination of θάρσος + βαίνω, 'having mounted courage', as the Czech has 'having regained my courage'.

³²³ Homeric repetition of τρὶς, cf. *Iliad* 5.536-7, 8.169-70, 11.462-3, 18.228-9, 20.445-6, 21.176-7, 23.817, *Odyssey* 6.154-5, 9.361, 11.206-7, 12.105, 21.125-6; cf. also Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3.650, 4.75, 4.745, 4.1665.

³²⁴ Future less vivid conditional (?)

But when they siphoned off the air from the stern and then opened up the doors for me to depths of empty space, I got off from the ship to kill the cosmobion. For it was necessary, because the beast was boring through the ship with its very hard beak and would quickly pierce the case. A tremor seized my noble limbs when I saw it as I flew swiftly, because it was a very great beast, but I aimed my phaser at the beast after I had regained my courage. But before I squeezed the trigger it propelled itself against me, and with a knock sent me flying into the empty cosmos. I, however, having started up the jet-pack I was carrying, came shooting back to my black ship. But before I could squeeze it, the monster hit me at that moment with its beak and then sent me into the murky, empty universe. Three times I aimed my phaser at the beast, striving to kill it; three times it sent me deep out into the emptiness of the universe with a knock; three times I returned, propelled by the pack – it was not easy to shoot the monster of the vacuum of space ~ if I were to miss, then I would destroy my black ship ~ But when I returned to fight for the fourth time, being propelled there by jet-pack, and I shot the cosmobion with my phaser's deadly ray.

- Βλήμενος ἑξαπίνης διεφῆνατο ἥϊτ' ὀμίχλη
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντον ἔφν τὸ πέλωρ καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκεν.
 Οἷδ' ἐὺ γηθοσύνοι ἐχαρίστεον τηλεῖφώνω (145)
[ἀσούρμω³²⁵ τὸν καὶ καλέουσιν ῥαδιόφωνον]
 μακροῖς ἢ πολλοῖς ἔπισιν γ' ὥς δαίμον' ἐπαινοῦν.
 Ἀλλὰ μ' ἀκουσάμενόν περ ὄτρυνεν θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ
 ἔπι ἀριστεύειν καὶ μοι μέγα οὔνομ' ὀπασσαι.
 Αὐτίκα τηλεῖφώνω ἐγὼν ἐτάρους προσέεσπον (150)
 «Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων πάντες ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι·
 Κοσμοβίοντα δ' ἐγὼ νῦν εὐτυχέως ἐνάρισα³²⁶
 ἀλλ' ἡμῖν γε δύω ἐτάρω ζακενοῖο πέταθον
 Ἴβω ῥουβώτης ἰδὲ καὶ Κύπτ' ἀστροπορευτῆρ
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι καλήν γε καθέξετε³²⁷ νῆα μέλαιναν (155)
 αὐτοτόπον ἥμος νοστήσω ἢ βοήσω.
 Ἴφι γ' ἐλάνόμενος κίστη πυραυλοφόροιο
 πτήσομαι εἰς ζακενὸν ζητοῦν ἐτάρω ἐρίηρε
 τὸν φυσικὸν ἰδὲ καὶ πλαστὸν ἐτάρω γε καὶ ἄμφω.
 Εἴ κεν ἐγὼν εὖροιμι δύοιν ἓνα ἢ δ' ἕτερον γε (160)
 ἢ δ' ἄμφω τόδε γὰρ ἡμῖν πολὺ φέρτατον εἴη

³²⁵ From the modern Greek word for 'wireless', ασύρματος.

³²⁶ = ἐναίρω.

³²⁷ = fut. ind. act. 2nd pl. of κατέχω.

Once it had been hit it suddenly became transparent like a mist and then the monster became invisible and no longer existed. Then they joyfully wished me well on the telephone [one that had no wires which they also call a 'radiophone'] in a great many words like they were praising a god.³²⁸ But my courageous heart encouraged me when I heard this to be the best and grant myself great fame.³²⁹ I immediately addressed my companions on the telephone:

"Listen to my words, all you trusty companions. I have now successfully slain the cosmbion, but two of our companions are flying through the vacuum of space, Ivo the robot and Kypta the astronaut, but now hold the black ship in this very spot for me until I return or call. Being propelled by a powerful jet-pack I shall fly into the vacuum of space seeking my two trusty companions, one produced by nature and one manufactured, but both my companions. If I should find one or the other of the two or both (which would by far be the better scenario for us),

³²⁸ Technology makes the gods in the *Astronautilia*: technology and science replaces god in the *Astronautilia* (cf. Weise 2024:272, "it becomes clear through this feature [i.e., the lack of Homeric gods] that modern science has taken the position of the gods in his epic"); cf. *Astr.* 3.192.

³²⁹ Lit. 'grant myself a might **name**'; difficult to do with as anonymous a name as one that means 'no one'.

- κικλήσω δ' ὕμῖν εἰν νηὶ ῥαδιοφώνῳ
 πρὸς ἡμᾶς πλώειν εἴλιν μ' αὐτόν τε καὶ ἄλλους.
 Εἴ κεν οὐκ αὐτοὺς εὖροιμι ἐνὶ βαθέεσσιν
 ἄψ ἀπονοστήσαιμι ἐὺκτιμένην ποτὶ νῆα (165)
 ἢ ἐβοησάμενος ὕμᾶς εἰλεῖν καλέσαιμι.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην ἐτάροις φωνῶ ἐπίησα³³⁰ δὲ γόμφον
 κίστης πυραύλον ἔλασεν μ' ἵς ἀντιδρασεῖς.
 Βῆν πτᾶσθαι ζακενόνδ' ἐτάρω ἐρίηρ' ἀναζητεῖν.
 Ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ πλεόμην ζητοῦν ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους (170)
 οἳ δ' εἰν νηὶ θοῇ ἀγορὴν θέμενοι ἀγόρευσαν
 καὶ σφιν μυθομένοισι διχῇ δ' ἀναφαίνετο βουλή·
 ἢ μὲν αὖθι μένειν καὶ ἐμὴν προδέχεσθαι ἄφιζιν
 ἥδ' ἐλάαν πλοῖον ἥδ' ὅν γλαφυρὸν ποτὶ πλάνην
 καὶ λείπειν θαμέναι³³¹ πλοιάρχοντ' εἰν ζακενῶ περ. (175)
 Εἰς τέλος μὲν δίδασαν³³² ψηφίζεσθαι περὶ ψυχῆς
 ἡμετέρης³³³ ἰδὲ καὶ Κύπτου ῥοβότου τε Ἴβωνος.
 Οἳ μὲν ψηφίζοντο διαὶ σφύρης παπύρησιν
 λευκῆς καὶ μελάνησι βάλον κυνέηνδε ἕκαστος
 πάσων τῶν βλητῶν σφαίρων εἰς λέξεν ἀριθμὸν (180)
 καὶ πλέονες ἦσαν λείπειν θαμέναι ἐνὶ κόσμῳ.³³⁴

³³⁰ = πιέζω.

³³¹ = θνήσκω.

³³² Obscure, the διδ root suggests it's formed from δίδωμι, but it could also be an oddly constructed perfect (Křesadlo has done reduplication with ι instead of ε before), but the Czech also implies some form of δικάζω or διαιρέω.

³³³ Royal we.

³³⁴ Homeric indecision between two options, but the second option usually prevails; this scene of Oudeis leaving the crew and the crew going against Oudeis' wishes evokes the scene in the *Odyssey* when Odysseus' crew go against Odysseus' wishes and kill and eat Hyperion's oxen.

then I shall call you through the radiophone in the ship so you can sail towards me to pick me and the others up. If I don't find them in the depths, then I shall return back to the well-wrought ship or order you to come pick me up by giving you a call."

So I spoke to my companions and pressed the button on the jet-pack, and the force of the reaction propelled me. I went flying through the vacuum of space to seek my two trusty companions. And so I sailed in search of my trusty companions, while those in my swift ship spoke publicly once they'd set up a forum and a plan revealed itself to them in two parts whilst they were discussing: either they could stay in that spot and wait for my arrival, or they could propel the ship to the pleasant hollow planet and leave their ship's captain to die in the vacuum of space. In the end, they decided to take a vote on my life as well as Kypta's and the robot Ivo's. They voted by using white and black paper balls, each man threw one into a cap, then one of them calculated the number of all the cast balls and the majority of votes was to leave us to die in the cosmos.

Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 πρὸς πλάνην γλαφυρόν· τάδε νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησα
 – ὕστερον εἶπεν ἐμοὶ Φράντης ρόβοτος πολυτέχνης –
 βῆν πτάμενος εἰς χάσμα ἐλαυνόμενος ὑπὸ κίστης (185)
 αἶψ' ἤϊρον ρόβοτον μὲν ἐγὼ τάχα κοσμοπορεύων
 ὥς ἄπορον κερμαστὸν³³⁵ ἐνὶ βάθεσιν ζακενοῖο.
 Τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ μάρψας ἔμπροσθεν ἐλαύνον ἐμεῖο
 χερσὶν συνωθῶν περ ἐλαυνόμενος ὑπὸ κίστης
 – ἄνιφοιν πυραύλου ἱκανὴ ἱς ἔνδον ἔεσκεν – (190)
 Κύπτην εἰσορόων ὅτ' ἄνωγέ με θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ.
 Καὶ αὐτὸν ἤϊρον βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κenoῖο
 κώματι κερμαστὸν ἰδὲ καὶ ὀλιγοδραμέοντα
 ἧ γε παρασκευὴ ἡ ζωοφορήσεος αὐτῆς
 ἔφθιτ' ἐπεὶ Κύπτης δηρὸν πτάτο ἔκτοθι νηὸς. (195)
 Καὶ τὸν ἐγὼ μάρψας ἔλκον κατ' ἀπείρονα κόσμον
 ῥαδιοφωνεύων τε καλοῦν ναυτῆρας ἐταίρους
 ἀλλ' οὐ μοι γλαφυρῆς νηὸς³³⁶ τις ἔηλθεν ἀμοιβὴ
 μαψιδίως³³⁷ γε καλεσκομένῳ φόβος εἴλετο γυῖα

³³⁵ = κρεμαστός, usually used in the sense of being hanged.

³³⁶ A common description of ships in epic, cf. *Iliad* 2.545, 3.119, 5.327, 8.180, 9.425, 10.389, *Odyssey* 3.287, 4.356, 9.99, 10.23, 12.82, 13.71 etc., Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3.315, 4.580, 4.1605, cf. also Aelian *Characteristics of Animals* 12.45.27, 13.21.37; γλαφυρός is also a term used in Classical literary criticism to describe 'polished, elegant, subtle' literary style, which is fitting for the Tolma since I have previously connected it to the Classical ship-as-poem analogy (cf. note on *Astr.* 1.203).

³³⁷ cf. *Iliad* 2.120, 2.214, 5.374, 5.759, 13.627, 15.40, 20.298, 20.348, *Odyssey* 2.58, 3.72, 3.138, 7.310, 9.253, 14.365, 16.111, 17.451, 17.537.

Immediately the rocket propelled the beautifully constructed ship to the hollow planet, and I – fool that I am – didn't realise this (Franta the robot of many skills told me this later on) I went flying through the abyss propelled by the pack, when all a sudden I found the robot as I swam quickly through the cosmos, where he was helplessly hanging in the depths of empty space. Having caught him, I drove him in front of me, pushing him forwards with my hands and being propelled by the pack – there was enough power inside the rocket for both of us – then, I was encouraged by my heroic heart as I searched for Kypta. And I found him in the depths of the empty universe, hanging in a deep slumber and also in a feeble state, since the preparations for sustaining Kypta's life had stopped working because he'd been flying for too long outside the ship. And after I'd caught him I dragged him through the boundless cosmos, calling my fellow sailors on the radiophone, but no response came from the hollow ship at all. Fear seized my limbs as I called out in vain,

- λειφθέντ' εἰν ζακενῶ καὶ ἀμηχανίῃ³³⁸ ἔχε θυμόν. (200)
 Αὐτὰρ ἐμὴ κραδίη γε διάνοιχα μερμήριζεν
 ἢ ῥόβοτον λελιπῶς καὶ Κύπτην τὸν προδοτῆρα
 σφόδρα ἐλάνεμεναι σπεύδων πλοίοιο τύχεσθαι
 ἢ τὼ ἐλκέμεναι ὥς πλοίαρχον ἐπέοικεν
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι φρονέοντι δοάσσατο φέρτερον εἶναι (205)
 τὼ μὲν ἐλκομένῳ σῶρειν μελάνης ἀπὸ κῆρος
 ἢ ἐ τύχειν πλοίου ἢ σὺν ἐτάροις ἀπόλεσθαι.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ πυραύλου δύναμις φθινέσκει³³⁹ ἐμεῖο
 οὐδ' ἦν ὑπολογισαμένη τρεῖς φῶτας ἐλαύνειν.
 Ἀλλὰ γέ μοι φεῖσροι ἦσαν ὀλοώτατα ὅπλα (210)
 καὶ Κύπτη προδοτῆρί τε καὶ Ἴβωνι ῥοβῶτη
 τοὺς μὲν ἐγὼ μάρψας ἔβαλον ὀπίσω κατὰ χάσμα
 αὐγὴν καὶ προβάδην ἔλασεν ἰς ἀντιδρασεΐης.³⁴⁰
 Φεῖσροισιν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 πλοίου ζητοῦντες καὶ ἐμοὺς ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους (215)
 καὶ μὲν νῆα θοὴν περ ἐλεύσομεν τηλὸν εὐόσῃν.
 Εἶσατο δ' ὥς ἀστήρ λάμπων μελάνου ζακενοῖο.
 Γηθοσύνος κίστης πυμάτην δύναμιν δ' ἀνατρέψα
 φεῖσροισιν βάλλων ὀπίσω τρεῖς ἄμμε ἔλαυνον
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ θᾶσσόν περ ἐβήσαμεν ἀστονρέοντες (220)
 λεῦσσον τῷ πλοίῳ φῦναι καὶ κοσμοβίοντα
 καινὸν³⁴¹ ὅς δ' ἐπίβησε πάλιν καλεργέα νῆα.

³³⁸ cf. *Odyssey* 9.295 ἀμηχανίῃ δ' ἔχε θυμόν (reaction to Polyphemos); ἀμηχανία/ἀμήχανος is also commonly attributed to Jason in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, cf. 1.460, 1.1286, 2.860, 3.432, 3.504, etc.

³³⁹ = φθίω.

³⁴⁰ The sort of resourceful problem solving (πολυμήχανος) we'd expect from Odysseus in a sci-fi scenario.

³⁴¹ Καινός is a novelty indicator: something 'new, fresh, novel' is attacking the 'old-fashioned, antiquated' ship; New vs. Old.

abandoned in the vacuum of space, and helplessness seized my mind. But my heart was debating between two options: whether to propel myself in haste to catch up with the ship after abandoning the robot and the very traitorous Kypta; or to drag the two men along with me as befits a ship's captain. But it seemed to me to be the better option as I pondered to save the two men from black death by dragging them and to catch up with the ship or perish along with my companions. Except the power in my rocket was failing, since it was not programmed to propel three people. But I had phasers, very deadly weapons, and so did the traitor Kypta and the robot Ivo. Once I'd taken hold of them I shot a ray backwards through the abyss and the force of the reaction propelled us onwards. We sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos with the phasers, seeking our ship and my trusty companions, and we saw that the swift ship was in the distance. It was like a star shining in the black vacuum of space. I joyfully turned on the last bit of the pack's power, shooting the phasers backward and propelling us three, but as we went by swiftly swimming amongst the stars I could see that a new cosmobion had attached itself to the ship, who attacked the beautifully constructed ship once more.

Οὗτος κοσμοβίων περ ἔρυκεν νῆα μέλαιναν
αὐθι μένειν· τῷ γὰρ μὲν ἐγὼ δυνάμην ἐ κιχῆσαι. (225)

ἢ ῥα καλή γε τύχη· τάδε νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησα
ἀλλὰ γε τῷ φείσῳ πλήξας μιν ἄφαντον ἔθηκα.
Οἱ μὲν γηθοσύνοι ἐνδῶ ἴδον τηλεορήσει³⁴²
καὶ μὲν ἀνοιγνύντες ἔασαν εἰς νῆα μέλαιναν
αὐτὸν πλοίαρχον ρόβοτόν τε σιδήρεον ἄνδρα (230)

καὶ Κύπτην προδοτῆρ' εἰν κώματ' ἀποψύχοντα
– ἀλλὰ δέ οἱ ζωὴν τοι ἱητρὸς ἀνὴρ ἐσάωσεν –
οἷδ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐμοὶ ναυτῆρες ἐταῖροι
γηθοσύνα εὖ ἐμεῦ ἐχαρίστεον χειρε λάβοντες
μακροῖς ἢ πολλοῖς ἔπεσιν ὥς δαίμον' ἐπαινοῦν. (235)

Τοῖσι ἀκουόμενος μὲν ἐτέρφθην κύδεϊ γαίῳν
μακρὰ δ' ἀριστεύσας· τόδε νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησα
ὥς δολεροὶ ἦσαν καὶ ἄπιστοι πάντες ἐταῖροι
καὶ μ' ἔθελον λείπειν βάθεςιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
τοῦ γλαφυροῦ πλάνου ἔνεκεν κούρων δέ τε πυγῶν. (240)

Ἀλλὰ γε νῦν λάγνον γε φόβος ἔλε· εἵσατο³⁴³ πολλοὺς
κοσμοβίοντας ἔχειν πλάνηνδε ὁδὸς γλαφυρόνδε
οὕτως τοῖς μέτα νοῦν γε βέβληκαν κοσμοβίοντες
ἀλλὰ μὲν οὕτις πίστις ἔην ἐτάροισιν ἐμοῖσιν
ὥς οὐ κύντερον ἄλλο ταπεινοῦ φωτὸς ἔτυκτο. (245)

Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεςιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.

³⁴² This isn't the first time that glory has been mediated through a television screen, cf. 6.46, 6.63, 6.331; epic narratives and the epic gaze have already been compared cinematic sequences (cf. Paul 2013, Novokhatko 2021, Esposito 2016:469, see also Lovatt 2013 for more on the epic gaze, and McClellan 2019 on the spectacle of abused bodies), cf. also *Astr.* 13.269.

³⁴³ = οἶομαι (?)

This cosmobion held back the black ship so that it stayed in place, which is how I was able to reach it. But my companions inside were trembling in fear too much to kill the monster, which was a beautiful turn of fate but I – fool that I am – didn't realise it, instead I made it invisible once I'd struck it with my phaser. They joyfully watched it on television inside and opened the door to allow me, the ship's captain, into the black ship, as well as the man made of iron and that traitor Kypta, who was passed out in a deep slumber – but the doctor saved his life – and all my other fellow sailors joyfully wished me well as they took my hands, in a great many words like they were praising a god. I was delighted as I listened to them, rejoicing in the glory, and being the best by far. But I – fool that I am – didn't realise that my companions were all treacherous and faithless, and wanted to abandon me in the depths of the empty universe, on account of the hollow planet and the maiden's buttocks. But now fear snatched away their lustfulness, since they suspected that there were many cosmobionts on the path to the hollow planet, which is how the cosmobionts altered their minds,³⁴⁴ but I had no more trust in my companions, as there is nothing more shameful than a man made weak.³⁴⁵ From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

³⁴⁴ The sense is very obscure.

³⁴⁵ Homily/sententia, lit. 'nothing more dog-like'.

Book Θ

[Τὰ περὶ ψυχῶν καὶ Γρογαλῶν καὶ περὶ μάντεος]

Δηρὸν μὲν πλέομεν γλαφυρὸν κατ' ἀπείρονα κόσμον
[Μανδὸν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν]
οἰοπόλοι³⁴⁶ μοῦνοι· οὐδ' ἄλλος φαίνεται πλάνης
ἀλλὰ μέλαν μέγα χάσμα καὶ ἀστέρα σιγαλοέοντα.
Ἡέλιον ξεῖνον μέτ' ἀφικόμεθ' ἤε περισσὸν (5)
ξεῖνοι πλανῆται δὲ περιστοφέοντο περ' αὐτόν.
Ταύτων πλανήτων ἓν' ἀφικόμεθ' ὥστε πεφάνθη
Γαίης ἡμετέρης παρόμοιος· αἰσθητὴρ δὲ
χημιακὸς δ' ἔξειλέ ἐ πλανήτην πολέσσιν.
Οὗτος πλανήτης δὲ περιστρέφε θαῦμα ἴδεασθαι (10)
μουνάξ εἰν ἄξωνι ἐῷ ἐνιατῷ ἐκάστῳ
ὥς περ καὶ ὁδὸς ἐστι περιῖξ ἡλέκτορα πλάνου
τῷ τρόπῳ ὥς Μήνη στρέφεται Γαίης περὶ σῶμα
ἡμετέρης· καὶ ὥς πλάνου εἰν ἡμίσει αὐτοῦ
αἰὲν ἀρχεῦει μονίμη νῦξ ἡ ἐ κρύος τε (15)

³⁴⁶ cf. note on *Astr.* 7.3.

Book 8

*[The events concerning the butterflies and Grogals, as well as
on a prophet]*

We sailed for a long time through the hollow and infinite universe [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe] wandering all alone; no other planet appeared apart from the great black chasm and glittering stars. Then we arrived at an alien and strange sun, and there were alien planets orbiting around it. One of these planets that we came to seemed very similar to our Earth, since our chemical sensor chose this planet out from all the others. This planet (a wonder to behold) orbits around its axis a single time in a one year, as its path around the planet's sun is of the same kind as the Moon's orbit around the body of our Earth, and how on half of the same planet a fixed and chilly eternal night holds command,³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷ i.e., like the dark side of the moon; this is describing a 'tidally locked' orbit.

ἄλλα δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ θέρμη μεγάλη τε καὶ ἡμαρ
 ἡμίςυ μηδετέρου δύναται ζωὴ ἐπέχεσθαι
 ἐν μὲν θερμώτατον ἰδὲ καὶ ψυχρώτατον ἄλλο³⁴⁸
 ἄλλα μὲν ἡμισέων χώρων ζώνη μετὰκειται
 ἣ δέ τε ζωοφόρον περ ἔχει κλίμα ἡδὺν καὶ ἐσθλὸν (20)
 τὴν δὲ διαγνωτὴν πλέομεν πότι καὶ δέ τ' ἄνωθεν
 ἐσσύμενοι ζαπέδῳ δ' ἔχομεν καλεργέα νῆα.
 Αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ νηϋφίν³⁴⁹ γ' ἐτάρων τρίας ἄλτο χαμᾶζε
 τὴν μὲν ἐγὼ πύθεσθαι ἐνὶ πλάνῃ ἀπόπεμψα
 αἵτινες οὐσίαι εἶην χθονὶ βρώματ' ἔδουσαι (25)
 εἰ μὲν γ' ἀγριόθυμοι ὑπερφιαλοὶ τε κακαὶ τε
 ἡὲ φιλόξεinoi καὶ θυμὸν ἡδὺν ἔχονται
 οἳ δ' αἶψ' ἐρχόμενοι ξείνην ἐορακότες αἶαν
 ἄψ ἀπονόστησαν λέξαν σάφα εἶναι ἅπαντα
 νηϋφιν δ' ἐκβήσαντος ἐλεύσομεν χρήματα αὐτοῖ. (30)
 Ἦδε μέση ζώνη χαριέστατον εἶχε φύτωμα
 ἔσκε δὲ τῆς ζώνης ἀνθήματα πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ
 ποικιλοχρώματα πάντα τε καὶ μορφῇσι πολλῇσιν
 καὶ ἔναι μεγάλαι ἄνθαι καὶ θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι
 ἡδὺν ὀδωδυῖαι πᾶσαι· τόδε χάρμα τέτυκτο. (35)

³⁴⁸ cf. note on *Astr.* 7.46; ψυχρός and θερμός are both terms used in Classical literary criticism, cf. Aristophanes *Frogs* 119, 125.

³⁴⁹ cf. LSJ s.v. ναῦς, “*Ep. gen. and dat. pl. ναῦφι, -φιν, Il. 2.794, 16.281, Od. 14.498*”.

but on the other half there is a long hot day instead; life is unable to be sustained in the middle of either of the two, one is very hot and the other is very cold. But a zone lies between the two areas which has a pleasant and fine climate that can sustain life, and so we sailed there once we'd discerned it and darting to the ground from above, we moored the beautifully constructed ship. Three of my companions immediately leapt onto the ground from the ship, whom I sent out onto the planet to investigate what sort of food-eating beings there are in the land, and whether they're wild minded, arrogant, and base, or friendly and kind-hearted. And once they'd seen an alien land while they were walking quickly, they came back again to tell us that everything was quite clear, then after disembarking from the ship we saw the things for ourselves. This middle zone had the most beautiful plants, and this zone also had many fine flowers too, all multicoloured and in many different shapes, and there were some large flowers too, a wonder to behold, all sweet smelling. It was a delight.

Οὐσῖαι καὶ ἔσκον ἐκεῖ πτερυγαταὶ ἅπασαι
οἰωνοῖς τροχίλοις³⁵⁰ εὐκυῖαι³⁵¹ χρώμασι πᾶσι
ἢ καὶ ἀνθοφίλοις μικροῖς ζῳοῖς πτεροέσσι
οἷά γε τὰς ψυχὰς Γραῖοι καλέοντο παλαιοὶ
ἀλλὰ γέ τοι καινοὶ *λεπιδόπτερα* νῦν κεκάληκαν.³⁵² (40)

Τοῖσι δ' οὐσῖαι πλάνου ἦσαν εὐκυῖαι
πολλὰ δὲ καλλίονες καὶ μείζονες ἡμετέρων περ.
Ἀλλὰ μὲν οὐ δυνατὸν σφε διαγραφέναι³⁵³ ἐπέεσσιν
ξεῖναι οὐσῖαι ἦσαν πλάνου ἀτόποιο.
Τὰς μὲν νῦν ψυχὰς κικλήσομαι ὥς βραχὺ λέξει. (45)

Ἄμμε πέρ' ἐρχομένους καλαὶ ψυχαὶ πετάοντο
– παμμόρφοι πάμχρωσι ἔην μέγα χάρμα ἴδεσθαι –
καὶ λυγίης³⁵⁴ φωνῇσι ἄεισαν ἠὲ τ' οἰωνοί.
Ἀλλὰ δὲ τῶν ἔσκεν γλώσση ἰδὲ καὶ ἰδίωμα
πάσῃν Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκεν ἀοιδήν· (50)

«Ὡ ξεῖνοί τινές ἔστέ; πόθεν δ' ἰκάνετε *χώρην*
ἡμετέρην; τίς γὰρ *πρῆξις* δ' ἦγεν μετὰ *ψυχὰς*;
Ἄμμες δ' *εἰράϊαι*³⁵⁵ οὐσῖαι εἶμεν ἅπασαι
οὐτινί τι βλαβερόν ποίουςαι οἷτινες εἶεν –
ἢ ξεῖνοι ἢ αὐτότοποι καὶ αὐθιγενεῖς. (55)

³⁵⁰ Lit. 'running birds', i.e., hummingbirds.

³⁵¹ = εἰκυῖαι, perf. part. act. fem. nom. pl. of εἶκυα.

³⁵² New vs. Old.

³⁵³ A verb that expresses self-consciousness at the literariness of the text; cf. note on *Astr.* 7.40.

³⁵⁴ = λιγύς (**Křesadlo has a tendency to replace iotas with upsilons**, as seen above with εὐκυῖαι), the Czech translates it as '*sladkými*' which means 'sweet'.

³⁵⁵ = εἰρηναῖος.

And there were beings there that were all winged, and resembled hummingbirds in their entire appearance, or those small-winged flower-loving creatures that the ancient Greeks called ‘psychai’,³⁵⁶ but new men call them ‘lepidoptera’ now.³⁵⁷ And the planet’s beings resembled these, but much more beautiful and larger than ours. But I’m not able to sketch them out in words, they were alien beings that belonged to an extraordinary planet. I will now call them ‘butterflies’,³⁵⁸ as it takes a short time to say. These beautiful butterflies fluttered about to us as we came – they came in all kinds of shapes and colours; it was a great wonder to behold – and sang in shrill³⁵⁹ voices like birds. But their language was also unique, and our translator Franta translated the entire song:

“Oh aliens, who are you? Where have you come to our land from? And what business brings you amongst the butterflies? We are all peaceful beings who do no harm to anyone at all, whoever they are – whether he’s an alien or a native, born here in this place too.

³⁵⁶ Lit. ‘souls’, i.e., ‘butterflies’.

³⁵⁷ i.e., ‘scale-wing’, taxonomic name for butterflies.

³⁵⁸ Using the more *antiquated/old-fashioned* term, ‘psychai’; the Old wins out over the New (New vs. Old).

³⁵⁹ Ἀγρύς being used to describe the sound an insect makes immediately evokes the cicada, which are creatures laden with meta-poetic resonance in Hellenistic literature (as well as birds), representing the poet himself, cf. Callimachus *Aetia* fr. 1.29-35 when Callimachus wishes to be a cicada; cf. my notes on *Astr.* 8.158, 187.

Οὐ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἔρις τις ἢ πόλεμός τε
 ὥς καὶ δ' ἄμμιν ἄπεστι ὅλως τὸ πάλαισμα βίοιο
 ἄλλας οὐσίας κτάμεναι οὐκ ἐστὶν ἀνάγκη
 οὐ μὲν σαρκοφάγειν οὐδ' ἄλλων δέρμα φορεῖσθαι
 χειμῶνος ἔνεκεν· οὐδ' ἄλλη χρεῖ ἐπίκειται (60)
 ἀλλ' ἡμῖν νέκταρ τρόφιμον δ' ἄνθεσσι κέκευθεν
 παμπόλλοις· ὥς οὐκ χρειή καὶ τοῖσιν ἐρίζειν.

Οὐ γὰρ καὶ δέομεν ἐσθῆτος ἢ σισύρης³⁶⁰ τε
 θερμὸς ἀήρ περ ἔνεστι τόπῳ καὶ σώματι λάχνη
 τῶν ἔνεκεν κτάμεναι ἄλλους οὐκ ἐστὶν ἀνάγκη (65)
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἄμμιν ἔρις καὶ ἀγῶνές εἰσιν ἐρώτων
 ἀλλὰ γένος τέκομεν ἄτερ ἀνδρῶν· παρθένοι εἰμὲν,
 ὥς οὔτις λάγνος τε πόθος δέ τ' ἔρωτι μάχεσθαι.

Οὐ γὰρ μὲν θέλομέν γ' ἀλλήλης ἱφὶ ἀνάσσειν·
 οὐ δέομεν πόλεος τ' ἐπιτάγματος ἢ συντάξων (70)
 χρειή δ' οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστι μάχεσθαι ἢ δ' ἐργάζειν
 οὕτως οὐ δέομεν συντάξεος ἢ κοράμων τε
 ὥς οὐ πόθος ἔνεστι ἀνάσσειν ἢ βιάζειν.

Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐλευθέραι ζωὴν ζῶμεν μὲν ἐκάστη
 κοῦφα ποταόμεναι μετὰ ἄνθεσιν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα (75)
 οὕτως οὐ μὲν ἔνεστιν ἔρις τις ἢ πόλεμός τε.

³⁶⁰ = σίσυρνα.

For we have no strife or war at all, since the entire struggle for life is distant from us, there's no need for us to slay other beings, nor eat meat, nor wear the pelts of others when it's winter. No other needs are laid upon us, except for nourishing nectar, which is hidden in many kinds of flowers, so there's no need for us to quarrel over them either. Nor do we need clothing or garments, since there is warm air in this place and fur on our bodies, for these reasons there's no need for us to slay others. We have no strife or contests over love, instead our species reproduces without men, and because we're virgins,³⁶¹ so we have no lust or desire to fight over love. And we don't want to rule one another by force: for we don't require the order or organisation of a city, because there's no need for fighting or working, and so we don't need covenants or even rulers, which is why there's no desire in us to rule or use force. But we each live our lives freely, flying nimbly here and there between the flowers, and so there's no strife or war at all here.

³⁶¹ Parthenogenesis.

- Ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν ζεῖνοι ἐλέησατε μή τι ποιῆσθαι
 ψυχῇσιν βλαμβερόν· ναι γὰρ πολ' ἀπήμονες³⁶² εἰμεν
 ἀλλὰ γε χάρμα ἶδεν ἰδὲ καὶ πυθέσθαι ἀοιδῇ.»
 Ὡς μὲν ἔφαν ψυχαὶ ἐρμήνευσεν³⁶³ τάδε Φράντα. (80)
 Τῇσιν ἀμειβόμενος ποσέφην ἔπεσιν πτεροέσσι
 αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα
 καὶ λυγέη³⁶⁴ φωνῇ μὲν ἄεισεν ἡὔτε ὄρνις·
 «Οὐδ' ἄρα νῦν δέον ἐστὶ φοβεῖσθαι κοσμοπορευτὰς
 ἡμᾶς· οὔτι κακὸν ἔχομεν φρεσὶν ἄλλοδαποί περ. (85)
 Ἀλλὰ κατὰ πρῆξιν³⁶⁵ πλέομεν δι' ἀπείρονα κόσμον
 ἄνερα ζητοῦντες χαλεπὸν φυζάνορα φῶρα
 ὑμετέρῳ πλάνῃ γ' ἔχεμεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ὥς τῷ γ' ἡμετέρῳ παρομοίῳ· ὥς κε δύναίτο
 φυζάνωρ ὃδ' ἀνὴρ ἐρύσαι πλοῖον ἐπὶ πλάνον (90)
 ἀλλὰ μὲν οὐ νῦν ἐστὶ τόπῳ· ἡμεῖς δέ τ' ἔπειτα
 ὑμᾶς καὶ ἄνθας τε τεθήπαμεν ἡὔτε θαῦμα.
 Ναι γὰρ σμερδαλέος καὶ οὔτιδανὸς πέλετ' ἀνὴρ
 ὃς μὲν ψυχῇσιν κακὰ ῥέζατο εὐπτεροέσσιν.»
 Ὡ ἐφάμην· αἱ γήθησαν ψυχαὶ πτεροέσσαι, (95)*

³⁶² cf. *Iliad* 1.415, 12.80, 13.761, *Odyssey* 4.487, 4.519, 5.40, 5.268, 7.266, 8.566, 10.551, 12.167, 13.39, 13.138, 13.174, 15.436, 18.260.

³⁶³ A technical word for interpreting foreign languages, the substantial noun is ἐρμηνεύς.

³⁶⁴ = λιγύς.

³⁶⁵ cf. *Odyssey* 3.72, 9.253.

But now, aliens, have mercy, don't do anything harmful to the butterflies. Yes, for we are completely harmless, but a delight to look at and to hear our song."

So the butterflies spoke, and Franta translated. I replied to them in winged words, but our translator Franta translated my words and sang in a shrill voice like a bird:

"There's no need right now to fear us cosmonauts, we aliens have no evil intentions. But we are sailing on business through the boundless universe, seeking a dangerous man, a thief in flight, we have driven our beautifully wrought ship to your planet, since it closely resembles our own; so this thief could have drawn his ship upon this planet, however, he isn't in this place currently, but since we are, we look in amazement at you and your flowers as wonders. Yes, it would indeed be a terrible and reckless man who does harm to you fair-winged butterflies."

So I spoke, and the winged butterflies rejoiced,

- ἀλλὰ δὲ μοί περ ἀοιδιάσασαι μῦθον ἔειπον·
 «Βουλὴν τοίγε σοφὴν τούτον φυζάνορος ἀνδρὸς
 δώσομεν εἴ κεν στῆς ὑπαλέξαι³⁶⁶ χερσὶ τεῇσιν
 ὄπλοισιν ἰδὲ καὶ ἐτάρων ὥς κάμμοραί³⁶⁷ εἶμεν.»
 [Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ρῆμα] (100)
 «Ταύτη μὲν δνοφέρη ψυχρῇ χαλεπῇ δέ τε χώρῃ
 λάσιαί εἰσιν φύσες τὰς μὲν Γρογαλοὺς καλέουμεν.
 Πολλάκι οἱ Γρογαλοὶ πρᾶγν ζώνην ἐπίβαινον
 ἡμῖν ψυχῇσιν γε μόρον καὶ κῆρα φέροντες
 τοὺς μὲν ἀμυνέμεναι ἡμῖν λισόμεθ' ἐπέεσσιν (105)
 καὶ εἴ κεν ῥέξας ἔσται βούλημα κραταίον.»
 Ὡς ταὶ ἔφαν· ἐμὲ δ' αὖτεσ ὄτρυνειν θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ
 τὰς μὲν ἀλεξέμεναι Γρογαλοὺς λυγροὺς δέ τ' ἀμύναι.
 οὐ γάρ μοί γε πόθη βουλήματος εἰν φρεσὶν ἦλθεν
 ἀλλ' ἔθελον θάνατον λυγρὸν ψυχῇσι ἀμῦναι. (110)
 τῆσιν ψυχῇσιν γ' ὄρκον περ ὅμασσα βοήθειν
 καὶ δέ τ' ἐμοῖς ἐτάροις ἐπίτελλον ταῦτα ποιεῖσθαι.
 Ἐζόμενοι χόρτῳ Γρογαλοὺς μὲν ἐμείναμεν ἄνδρας
 ~ εἶχον μὲν σκοπιὴν ψυχὰι ἔγνω δὲ κίχοντας ~
 τῆς χώρης ψυχρῆς ζοφοέντος ἥδ' ἀποτρεπτῆς (115)
 αἰὲν αὐγάων θερμῶν ἡλεκτόρος αὐτῶν
 οἱ δ' ἦλθον Γρογαλοὶ ψυχῇσιν κῆρα φέροντες.

³⁶⁶ = ἐπαλέξω.

³⁶⁷ cf. *Odyssey* 2.351, 5.160, 5.339, 11.216, 20.33.

but then told me this speech in song:

“we shall give you wise council on this fugitive, if you and your companions could stay to lend us help with your hands and weapons, since we are ill-fated.”

[our universal-translator Franta translated their words]

“In that murky, cold, and harsh land there are these shaggy creatures that we call the ‘Grogals’.³⁶⁸ These Grogals often attack this gentle zone, bringing doom and death to us butterflies, we beg you with our words to defend us against them and if you should do this then you shall have our mighty council.”

So they spoke, and my heroic heart encouraged me again to defend them and ward off these wretched Grogals. And so the longing for advice didn’t even enter my mind, but I wanted to defend the butterflies from miserable death. I swore an oath to help the butterflies, and ordered my companions to do the same. We sat on the grass and awaited the Grogals ~ the butterflies held a watch and knew that they were on their way ~ of the cold and dark land which is always turned away from the warm rays of their sun, and these Grogals came bringing along with them death for the butterflies.

³⁶⁸ *Girgal* is the name of a fantasy novel written by Jan Křesadlo in 1992 about the journeys of mutated dogs through space.

ἦσαν μὲν λάσιοι τέ τισιν κυσὶν εἰκότες ἦσαν
 τοὺς μὲν ἐπιχθόνιοι “Δοῦλαξ” κλησὶν καλέουσιν
 ἦσαν μὲν δύποδες καὶ ὀρθοὶ ἤυτε φῶτες (120)
 καὶ χηλῆσι ἐῆσι φέρον δόρατ’ ἡέ τε τόξα
 ὥστε μελάμβροτοι³⁶⁹ ἄνδρες εἰώθησαν ἐπὶ γαίῃ
 καὶ τε πολὺ πρότεροί γε κάρη κομοῶντες Ἀχαιοί.³⁷⁰
 Ἑλκήθροισι³⁷¹ δέ πάντες ἀφίκοντ’ εἰς πέρας αὐτὸ
 ποῦ ψυχρὴ χώρα κεκαλυμμένη³⁷² ἦν νιφετοῖο. (125)
 Ἑλκήθρους ἔλκον δέ τινες θῆρες δασύχαιτοι
 αὐτοῖσιν Γργαλοῖσιν ὁμοῖοι τέτραποδές περ.
 Οἱ μὲν ἐλκήθρους νιφοέντι τόπῳ λελιπόντες
 αὐτοὶ σὺν θήρεσσιν ἐσίς³⁷³ ψυχὰς ἐπίβησαν.
 Ἦρξαν τοξάζειν ψυχὰς ἄλλ’ οὐτ’ ἔτ’ ἔβαλλον (130)
 αἱ μὲν εὖστροποι³⁷⁴ ἦσαν ἀτὰρ Φρογαλοὶ βραδέες δέ.
 Ἀλλὰ πρὶν γε βάλειν τιν’ ὅϊστ’ οὐλοφόροντι
 ψυχάων δὲ καλῶν καὶ μαψιδίως ἀπολεσθαι
 ἅμμες δ’ ἀρνύμενοι ψυχὰς φείσρους ἐρύσαντες
 [δῖς· ἀμὰς ζωὰς λεπιδόπτερα καὶ εὖμορφα] (135)
 ἦρξαμεν ἀκτίνησι βάλειν Γρογαλοὺς ὀλοῇσιν.
 Βλήμενοι ἐξαπίνης διεφάναντ’ ἡὺτ’ ὁμίχλη
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντοι ἔφυν δασέες καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκαν
 ὀρθοὶ δὴ Γρογαλοὶ καὶ θῆρες τετράποδές τε.

³⁶⁹ This term is usually used to describe a land, so I’ve translated it as ‘*men from Africa*’ instead of the literal ‘*black men*’.

³⁷⁰ cf. *Iliad* 2.11, 3.43, 4.261, 7.85, 8.53, 13.310, 18.6, 19.69, etc., *Odyssey* 1.90, 2.7, 20.277.

³⁷¹ An ancient Greek word but using the meaning of the modern Greek descendant, ἐλκηθρο, ‘*sleigh, sled, sledge*’.

³⁷² = καλύπτω, perf. part. mp. fem. nom. sg.

³⁷³ A bit obscure how to translate ἐσίς here, the Czech doesn’t seem to translate it either.

³⁷⁴ = εὖστροπος/εὐτράπελος.

They were shaggy and resembled the particular dog that they call a “Dulux” on Earth.³⁷⁵ They were bipedal and stood upright like men, and they carried spears and bows in their paws as men from Africa were accustomed to do on land, and the very ancient Achaeans with their heads full of hair. And they all arrived on sleds to the very boundary where the cold land was covered by fallen snow. And some shaggy haired beasts that were similar to the Grogals but quadrupedal dragged their sleds. Then after they’d abandoned their sleds in the snowy place, they attacked the butterflies themselves along with the beasts. They began to shoot arrows at the butterflies, but didn’t hit any yet, since they were nimble but the Grogals were slow. But before they could hit any of the beautiful butterflies with an arrow that could bring destruction and destroy them for no reason, we in an attempt to save the psychai³⁷⁶ by drawing out our phasers [twice: our lives and the beautifully shaped butterflies] began shooting the Grogals with deadly rays. Those who’d been shot suddenly became transparent like a mist and then the shaggy ones disappeared and no longer existed, both the upright Grogals and the quadrupedal beasts.

³⁷⁵ i.e., they resembled the Old English Sheepdog breed, which is the breed featured in the paint brand Dulux’s advertisements (e.g. the ‘My Way’ advert from 1993, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-YJycJdsपो> [accessed 16/6/2025]).

³⁷⁶ A double entendre since *psychai* simultaneously means both ‘lives/souls’ and ‘butterflies’.

- Ὡς τέχνης πρόοδος νίκησεν χήμασι πᾶσιν. (140)
 Αἶδε καλαὶ ψυχαὶ ἡγερθεν νῦν περὶ ἡμᾶς
 καὶ ἐὺ γηθόσυναι ἐχαρίστεον ἡδεῖ ἀοιδῇ
 μακροῖς ἢ πολλοῖς ἔπεσιν. Φράντης μετεθήκε.
 Αὐτὰρ πλοίαρχος μὲν ἐγὼ ναῦταί τε ἐταῖροι
 βῆμεν ἴμεν γ' ἀμὴν³⁷⁷ εὐεργεῖν ποτὶ νῆα (145)
 τῇ δ' ἀναπασέμεναι³⁷⁸ ἰδὲ καὶ σίτοιο πάσσασθαι
 σώματα κλυζέμεναι καὶ πρηξάμεναι γλυκὸν ὕπνον.
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ὄροιο δ' ἐγείραμεν ἐκ γλυκεροῖο
 Βούρδην τεχνητῆρά γ' ἐγὼ καλέσας ῥόβοτόν τε
 Τόνδην ὅς δ' ἤδη τεχνήματα πολλά τε πυκνὰ (150)
 καὶ τοῖσιν φυτότειχος³⁷⁹ ἔτελλον τειχίσασθαι
 ἄμφι δὲ τῶν ψυχῶν χώρην μέγα καὶ κρατερόν τε
 ἡμῖν μὲν τέχναι τὸ τέτυξαι πᾶσαι ἔασιν.
 Ἔστιν γὰρ φυτοτεῖχος ἕως ζῶον φύτον ἄλλο
 ἀντ'³⁸⁰ αὐξανόμενον δέ τ' ἰαόμενον πολὺ τραῦμα. (155)
 Τοῦτο δὲ τεῖχος ἐγὼ ψυχῶν χώρην πέρι τεῦξαι
 τοὺς ἐτάρους ἥνωγά τε οἱ μοι καὶ ἐπίθοντο,
 τῇσιν ψυχῇσιν τεύχισμά³⁸¹ τε καὶ ὑπάλυξιν.

³⁷⁷ = ἡμέτερος.

³⁷⁸ = ἀναπαύομαι.

³⁷⁹ Lit. 'wall of plants', but the Czech translates as 'self-growing fence', suggesting that we translate the φυτο- in more the sense of 'grow, generate' like its root φύω.

³⁸⁰ ἀντί isn't typically used adverbially, but this seems to be the usage here (due to the lack of genitive); I've translated it more in the Homeric sense of equivalency, cf. LSJ s.v. ἀντί III.2.

³⁸¹ = τεῦγμα.

Thus, technological advancement is superior in every way.³⁸² The beautiful butterflies now assembled around us and joyfully wished us well with their sweet song in words that were long and numerous, and Franta translated for us. But my fellow sailors and I, the ship's captain, went to go back to our well-built ship to rest in it and get food, as well as wash our bodies and enjoy sweet sleep. But when we woke up from our sweet sleep, and after I'd summoned Burda the technician and the robot Tonda who knew many complex technologies, I ordered them to construct a self-generating wall around the land of the butterflies, one that's mighty and strong, since we have all the technologies necessary for its construction. For a self-generating wall is like other living plants in that it produces more of itself/heals many of its wounds. I ordered my companions to construct this wall around the land of the butterflies, and they obeyed me; it will be a protective work for the butterflies.³⁸³

³⁸² Homily/sententia, New vs. Old; cf. note on *Astr.* 3.140.

³⁸³ A possible meta-literary reading here is that, since the terms ψυχρός and θερμός are often used in Classical literary criticism to refer to literary style (cf. note on *Astr.* 7.46, 8.18), and this book takes place in the goldilocks zone between the two forms of criticism; Oudeis and his crew are now going to construct a wall to protect the butterflies (which I have also argued on my note on *Astr.* 8.48 are analogous to the treatment of Cicadas in Hellenistic literature) from the creatures from the 'lifeless' (ψυχρός) land, which represents poor quality literature; (n.b. the antithesis between ψυχή and ψυχρός in terms of *liveliness* and *lifelessness*).

- Εἵ κέν τοι Γρογαλοὶ ἦλθοιεν κῆρα φέροντες
 ἔρκος οὐχὶ δύναιτο ἀπέρχεσθαι πολὺ αἰπύ (160)
 ἀλλὰ γε αἱ ψυχαὶ δὲ ποτήσαιντ' αἶψ' ἐπὶ τεῖχος.
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐπεὶ φύτον ἐστὶ τὸ τεῖχος ὡς λαχανόν περ
 τοῖσιν μὲν Γρογαλοῖς χилоῦ θήκη δύνατ' εἶναι
 αὐτεπισκαζομένη· οἱ γὰρ παῦσαί γε δύναιτο
 ψυχὰς θηρεύειν ἐπεὶ οὐ λιμός σφησιν εἴη. (165)
 Τοῦτο δ' ἔφαν ἐτάροις καὶ οἱ μύθων ἐπίθοντο.
 Βῆσαν ἵμεν τεύχειν ρόβοτος Τόνδης δέ τε Βοῦρδα
 καὶ δέκα καὶ πισύρεσσιν ἐήμας' ἐπιχθονίοισιν
 μακρὸν μὲν φυτοτεῖχος ἔτευξαν ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ.
 Αἱ μὲν γηθόσυναι ψυχαὶ πτάμεναι περὶ τεῖχος (170)
 ἄμμ' ἐὺ ναυτῆρας τ' ἐχαρίστεον ἠδεῖ ἀοιδῇ
 ἀλλὰ γέ μοι βουλὴν ὡς ἥγγειλαν πρὶν ἔδωκαν
 (Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα)
 «Βουλοφόρην τοι ξεῖνε πάτερ καταλέξομεν αὐδὴν
 ὡς ὑπο περ μέντοι δέ τ' ἐτείναμεν αἶ κε³⁸⁴ σάωσαις. (175)
 Μίη τῶν μῆνων αἶ χώρην φωτιζούσιν
 τῶν Γρογαλῶν δνοφέρην δύναται ζωὴν ὑπόθεσθαι.
 Τῶν Γρογαλῶν προπάτωρες ἔσαν σαφοὶ ἢ τέχνησιν
 ἰφθυμοί· οἱ νῦν Γρογαλοὶ μωροὶ περ ἔασιν
 οὐδ' ἄρα τοῖσι δέον ἐργάζειν ἔσκε τε πρῆγμα (180)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τοῖς ρόβοτοι καὶ τέχναι πάντ' ἐτετεύχουν.

³⁸⁴ = ἐάν.

If the Grogals should come bringing death along with them, then they wouldn't be able to climb far up the steep fence, but the butterflies shall be able to quickly flutter over the wall. And since the wall is grown just like a vegetable, then it could become a self-supplying trove of fodder for the Grogals. So they could stop hunting the butterflies since they'd have no hunger. I told my companions this and they obeyed my words. The robot Tonda and Burda went to go construct it, and in fourteen Earthly days they made the large self-generating wall with grieving hearts. And the butterflies, joyfully flying around the wall, wished us sailors well with their pleasant song, but also gave me the advice that they'd mentioned previously (Franta my universal translator translated their words):

“Alien, father, we shall tell you in a voice that brings council that we previously made you promise if you should save us. One of the moons that illuminates our land can put the Grogals' gloomy life at risk. The ancestors of the Grogals were wise and valiant in the technological sciences, but the modern Grogals are stupid, because they don't need to do things for themselves, but rather have robots and all sorts of technologies to do work for them.”³⁸⁵

³⁸⁵ This is somewhat reminiscent of the position of humanity in the 2006 film *Idiocracy* and 2008 Pixar film *WALL-E*; cf. also Plato *Phaedrus* 274b-275e on Socrates' criticisms against the new-fangled technology of writing and how it's a detriment to intelligence.

- Οὕτως δυσγενέες καὶ βληκέες³⁸⁶ οἱ τετύκοντο
 οὐδ' ἄρα πλεῖ γε δύναντο ἐπισκευάσαι μηχανήμα
 καὶ γε πάλιν δ' ἦλθον στήσινδε πρωτοτύπονδε.
 Ἡμεῖς αἱ ψυχαὶ ἔπι δ' οὐκ ἐργασάμεθ' αὐταὶ (185)
 τέχνας καὶ ῥοβότους ὥς τούτων οὐ δέον ἔσκε
 ἀλλὰ γε Μουσάων χαριέστατα ἔργα ποιοῦσαι³⁸⁷
 γνώμην ἢ ἐφρόνημα σοφόν περ ἐχέκαμεν³⁸⁸ αἰεὶ
 χωρὶς τεχνάων ῥοβότων καὶ ἀνδροῖδων τε.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ τῶν Γρογαλῶν πρόγονοι μὴν ἰδὲ μῆνην (190)
 ἡμετέρων πισύρων πύκνησαν θαῦμα ἰδεσθαι
 οὗτος ἵνα βάρους ηὔξηκαν ὥς δέον ἐστί
 τὸν μὲν ἄῃρα ἔχειν καὶ ζωὴν βαστάζεσθαι.
 Ἔσκεν μὲν μῆνης γε σιδηρὸς περ πολέκαμνος³⁸⁹
 εἰν πέτρῃ – τὸ νέοι γε μετάλλευμ'³⁹⁰ οὐνομάζουσιν (195)
 τοῦτον ἐργάζοντες ἄῃρ' εἰν μῆνη ἔτευξαν.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν Γρογαλοὶ τέχνων γε λελάσμενοί³⁹¹ εἰσιν
 καὶ μῆνη μὲν ἐρῆμος νῦν καὶ ἐξώλης τε
 πάντες γὰρ Γρογαλοὶ μιν ἐὺ φύγον ἢ δ' ἀπόλοντο
 ἡμασιν ἀρχαῖοις τότε' ἐπίσταντ' ἀστροπορεύειν. (200)
 Μοῦνος ἀνὴρ Γρογαλὸς μῆνη πυκνῇ γε λελέφθη
 νέκρος κρυστάλλῳ καταδὺς τότε δ' ἀσκηθῆς τε.

³⁸⁶ = βλάξ (βλᾶκες).

³⁸⁷ Sap and dew (the common foods for insects) are often connected in Classical literature to meta-poetics, representing the purity or refinement of poetry, which is emphasised here by the fact that these are referred to as the 'Muses' works'; this adds credence to my earlier point that the butterflies are analogous to Hellenistic meta-poetic cicada imagery (cf. *Astr.* 8.48, 8.158).

³⁸⁸ = ἔχω (ἐσχέκαμεν).

³⁸⁹ Lit. 'much-worked', i.e., malleable.

³⁹⁰ From the modern Greek word for 'ore', μετάλλευμα.

³⁹¹ = λανθάνω (λελησμένοι).

Thus they have become degenerates and stupid, so they're no longer able to repair their machines, and have returned to their primitive³⁹² state. While we, the butterflies, don't make things ourselves like machines and robots, since we have no need for them, but for the very gracious works made by the Muses. We have always possessed wise minds and thoughts, without the need for machines, robots, and even androids. But the ancestors of the Grogals compressed one of our four moons (a wonder to behold), so that they could increase the gravity, since it was necessary to keep the air and support life. On the moon there was very malleable iron in the rock – which new men call an 'ore', and they can produce air on the moon by working this. But now the Grogals have forgotten these technologies, and the moon is currently abandoned and ruined, since all the Grogals fled from it or vanished in ancient times when they knew how to travel amongst the stars. A single Grogal is left on the dense moon: a corpse set in ice³⁹³ and thus also unharmed.

³⁹² The word *prototypos*, 'prototype', has modern meta-literary resonances; the Grogals have returned to their *archetypal* form.

³⁹³ cf. my notes on *Astr.* 2.289, and 5.203; New vs. Old: an ancient man preserved by being frozen into an imperishable state lends itself very well to meta-literary analysis, since this displays an act of preserving the past like how late antique writers often explored the same concept by comparing people to statues.

Ὅς μὲν μάντις ἔεσκε ἀμύμων καὶ μάλα πολλὰ
 ἤδη οἷα δ' ἐόντα τε δ' ἐσσόμενα προτ' ἐόντα
 μαντοσύνησι πολλῇσιν ἐπεὶ πόρε τις θεὸς αὐτός. (205)

Εἴ κέν μιν μήνης εὖρης κρυσταλλόμενον περ
 καὶ οἱ ἐγκέφαλον δ' ὀρμήσης ῥευματοπλήξει³⁹⁴
 τῇδ' ἠλεκτριάκῃ, ὅδε τοι μάντευμα γ' ἐνίψει
 ἀσφαλέες παντῶν τὰ μὲν εἰροντᾶς ἀπὸ φωτὸς
 κρυσταλλοπήκτοιο· μέγας μάλα μάντις ἔτυκτο.» (210)

Ὡς φῆσαν ψυχαί τε μεταφρήζων μετέθηκεν.
 Τῇσι χάριν μὲν ἔδωκά τε καὶ βουλὴν ὑπέδεξα.
 Αὐτίκα τοὺς ἐτάρους ἦνωγον νῆ' ἐπιβῆναι
 καὶ ἐνὶ τῶν ῥοβότων λέξας τρόπον ὃν κεν ἔποιτο
 – οἷον μὲν ῥοβοτόν γε κυβερνητῆρά περ εἶχον – (215)
 τοῦδ' ἐπίταγμα δέδωκα πορευέμεναι διὰ χάσμα.

Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες
 τὴν μήνην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ὥς περ ἔειπον
 ψυχαὶ ὠκυπετειναί.³⁹⁵ ἐρῆμος ἦν ἄδομός τε. (220)

Μικρὴ μὲν μήνη ἦν ταύτη ἀλλὰ βαρεῖα
 ὥς μὲν πυκνῶσαν πρωτογρογαλοὶ κλυτοτέχνοι
 ἦν γὰρ κυφοτέρη καὶ κυκλτέρη χθονὸς αὐτῆς
 ἡμετέρης τὴν μὲν περ εἰώθαμεν ἀμφιβιβαίνειν.

³⁹⁴ Reviving a dead body with electricity evokes Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and the fact this it is a prophet is being resurrected evokes the katabasis episode of the *Odyssey* when Tiresias prophesies Odysseus' *nostos* (11.90-137); *literally* bringing the past back to life (cf. Vladimir Sorokin's 1999 novel *Blue Lard*).

³⁹⁵ = ὠκύπερος, which is used as an epic epithet for ships, e.g., *Iliad* 13.62, Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 2.1255.

He was once an excellent prophet and knew very much about things that were, are, and will be, since some god himself has furnished him with many means of divination.³⁹⁶ If you should find him frozen in ice on the moon, and start up his brain with a bolt of electric current, then he will tell you an infallible oracle about all the things that you ask from the man who's been cryogenically frozen, since he is a very great prophet."

So the butterflies spoke, and our translator translated. We gave them thanks and accepted their council. I immediately ordered my companions to board the ship and after telling one of the robots (the robot that I had as my pilot) what way we would be flying, I gave him commands to sail through the abyss. And immediately the rocket propelled the beautifully constructed ship, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving behind the alien planet, and then we arrived at the moon just as the swift-winged butterflies told us. It was abandoned and uninhabited. This moon was small but weighty, since the early Grogals, famed in technology, had compressed it, because it was more curved and circular than our very Earth, which we are accustomed to walk about on.

³⁹⁶ This Grogal prophet is specifically said to have received his powers of divination from a *god*, which is interesting in comparison to other main form of divination in the *Astronautilia*, namely interpretation (see note on *Astr.* 6.235), which is mostly done by machines such as Franta: remember, technology *is* god here.

Τοῦνεκα χρήματα πάντα δ' οἷσσαντο ἤυτε μακρὰ (225)
 τηλοπορώτερά³⁹⁷ περ ἢ ὡς τετύκοντο δ' ἀληθῆς
 κρημνοὶ ἢ ἐπάγοι τε λίθοι τε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐταῖροι
 πάντες μακρὰ βίβαντες οἷσαντ' ὥστε γίγαντες
 ἀλλὰ περ ἦν ὥπὸς ἀπάτη ὡς πουλὺ κέκυφεν.
 Βῆμεν ἴμεν ζητεῖν μάντιν γε πεπηγμένον ἄνδρα (230)
 κυρσταλλούπηκτόν τέ ἐ δ' εἰς τέλος ἡὔρομεν ἄμμες
 ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι ὑπαὶ χθονά· κρυστάλλοιο
 σπήλαιον πᾶν πίμπλατ' ἐπεὶ ψυχρώτερον ἔσκεν
 αὐτῆς τῆς χώρης μήνης ἔνεκεν στροφεοῦσης
 ἀλλὰ γέ τοι μεχάνημα κινήσεος οὔκεν ἐνίσπω· (235)
 εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ κριτικὰ μωροὶ μαθήμασι πᾶσιν
 καὶ ἰδ' ἀμήχανοί εἰσι λάβεσθαι πρῆγμα διδακτόν.
 Τούτων μὲν ἔνεκεν κριτικοὶ φῶτες κοτέουσιν
 καὶ φασιν βλακικῶς καματῆρα τὰ πρῆγματα εἶναι.
 Εὔρομεν ἀστροπόλον κρυσταλλόμενον ἐνὶ σπέσσι (240)
 μακρόν καὶ λᾶσιον Γρογαλὸν ἰδὲ φῶτα πέλωρον
 μεῖζονα καὶ πάχετον πάντων Γρογαλῶν ὑπογυίων
 τοὺς μὲν εἶν πλάνη περ ἐλεύσομεν ὅξει' αὐτμῆ.

³⁹⁷ Obscure, but most like a comparative form of τηλωπός.

Which is why it seemed like all things were large, when they were further off in the distance than they really seemed; the cliffs, hills, stones, and all of my own very companions seemed large like giants as they walked, but it was an optical illusion since it was very curved. We went to go seek the frozen prophet, and eventually we found him cryogenically frozen in the hollow caverns underground. The entire cavern was full of ice since it was colder than the surface of the moon thanks to its rotation, but I won't tell you about the mechanics of its movement. Since my critics are stupid in all things mathematical, and are helpless in grasping things that are taught.³⁹⁸ Because of this, my critics hold a grudge against me and stupidly say that the things are boring. We found the frozen star-gazer in a cavern, a great and shaggy Grogal, a monstrous man, larger and fatter than all the present Grogals that we'd seen on the planet with their piercing scent³⁹⁹.

³⁹⁸ The most important of Křesadlo's critics for the *Astronautilia* is Pavel Mandys, the namesake of the *Astronautilia*'s villain, Mandys (according to Pišťánek 2009 in Křesadlo 2015:213).

³⁹⁹ ἄγρυμνῆ was used at *Astr.* 6.149 to mean 'battle' by synecdoche, which seems to be what's going on here as well.

Τῷ μὲν σῶμα ὅλον πυκινοὶ τρίχες εὖ κεκάλυφαν
 ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ ὦψ ἔσκε καλὴ ἀνθρωπίνῃ εὐκυῖα (245)
(ἄλλοι μὲν Γρογαλοὶ λάοιοι θήρεσσιν ἔοικαν)
 κεῖτο δὲ κρυστάλλοιο ἀνὴρ μάντις θεοειδὴς
 μακρὸς καὶ λάσιος τὸ σέβας ἔλεν εἰσορόωντας
 πάντας· ἔπειτ' ἄδην γε τέθηκαν⁴⁰⁰ πάντες ἐταῖροι
 τοῖσιν ἐγὼ σμινύησιν ἔτελλον μάντιν ὀρύξαι (250)
 κρυστάλλῳ λάμπρῳ νέκρον τὸν φῶτα πύθεσθαι.
 Αὐτίκα οἱ σμινύας χερσὶν στιβαρῆσι λάβοντες
 ὥρυσαν· ἰητήρ γε παρασκευεν τὰ ἅπαντα
 τεχνικὰ σὺν Βούρδῃ τεχνήτορι μάντιν ἐγείρειν.
 Τὸν μὲν ὀρυξάμενον μάντιν κροτάφοισιν ἔθηκαν (255)
 εὐθύμημ' *ἠλεκτρώδας* τό γέ τοι καλέουσιν
 τεχνομαθεῖς καὶ μιν κεφαλὴν ὠτρυνέκεν ἦρξαν.
 Αὐτίκ' ἀνὴρ κρυοεῖς νέκρος περ ἀνήρξατο μύθων
 ὥσπερ δ' ἐξ ὕπνοιο βροτός τις ἦρξ' ἀγορεύειν
 καὶ βραδέη τε βαρυφθογγῷ φήμῃ ἔπος εἶπεν (260)
 γλώσση τῶν Γρογαλῶν γε παλαίῃ καὶ φθαμένη περ
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς μετέθηκεν ἔπος Φράντης μεταθήτωρ.
*«Τίπτε, σχέτλιε ζεῖνε, μ' ἐγείρεις κόματος ἔξω
 ἡδέος; οὐκὲν πλεῖν ἐθέλοιμι βίον τε πάθην τε.*

⁴⁰⁰ = θεάομαι.

His whole body was well covered in densely packed hairs, but his face was beautiful like a human's (the other Grogal people were like beasts), the prophet lay frozen in the image of a god, great and shaggy, religious awe seized all of us as we looked at him. And when all my companions had gazed at him long enough, I ordered them to dig the prophet out of the shining ice with their hoes, so that we could learn from the dead man.⁴⁰¹ They immediately snatched up the hoes in their sturdy hands, and began digging, while our doctor, along with the technician Burda, prepared all the technologies to wake up the prophet. And once the prophet had been dug up, they placed on the sides of his head well-conceived devices that technological scientists call 'electrodes', and began stimulating his head. The ice-cold dead man immediately got up shot up, speaking exactly how some mortal man would start talking at the end of his slumber, and uttered an oracle in a slow and deep-toned voice, in the ancient language of the Grogals that came before, but even so, our translator Franta translated this speech:

"Why, unyielding alien, do you rouse me out of my sweet slumber? I no longer want life and suffering.

⁴⁰¹ This episode constitutes a *nekyia*, which traditionally entails the necromantic calling up and questioning of a ghost, such as in book 11 of the *Odyssey* and book 6 of the *Aeneid*, or Lucian's *Menippus* or *The Descent into Hades*.

Πάντως μηδὲν φῶναι ἄριστον τοῖσι τάδ' ἐστὲ⁴⁰² (265)

παῖσιν γ' εἰν κόσμῳ ζῶοισιν πουλυβιοῦσιν
φύντα δ' ὅπως ὤκιστα ἐπεὶ θαμέναι⁴⁰³ λελαθόντα
πασάων ταλαπωριάων⁴⁰⁴ καὶ πῆματος αἰνοῦ
ὅσσα δὲ τῆς καρποὶ ζωῆς πάμπολλοι ἔασιν.»

Ὡς φάτο· τὸν μὲν ἔγωγε ἀμειβόμενος προέειπον (270)
αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταθήτωρ μετέθηκε τὸ ῥημα.

»Ἦλθον, ἄνα, σά τε γούνα λάβειν καὶ πολλὰ ἐρωτᾶν
μάντιν μαντεύειν περὶ Μανδύος καὶ περὶ μήλου
κοσμοθεωροῦντος· τότε κλέψεν βυσσοδομεύων
καὶ ἔφέρει φλαφυρὸν καὶ (275)

ἀπείρονα κόσμον ἀναύδου

πάντα δὲ κινδυνῶν ὀλέσαι φαύλης πραπίδεςσιν.«
... καὶ οἱ ταῦτά γε πάντα περὶ προβάτου κατέλεξα
καὶ πολὺ λισσόμενος ζητοῦν βουλήματα φωτός.
Σμερδαλέως γέλασεν νέκρος καὶ ἀμείβετο μύθῳ·
«Τίπῃ αὐτ' ἀνθρωπίσκε θέλεις σῶσαι ἓνα κόσμον; (280)
Πάμπολλοι μὲν ἔασι τε καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀριθμός.

⁴⁰² This speech evokes Theognis lines 425-8 (*πάντων μὲν μὴ φῶναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον*, // *μηδ' ἐσιδεῖν αὐγὰς ὀξέος ἡελίου*, // *φύντα δ' ὅπως ὤκιστα* πύλας Αἰδαο περῆσαι // καὶ κεῖσθαι πολλὴν γῆν ἐπαμυσσόμενον. – “It is best of all for mortals not to be born and not to look upon the rays of the piercing sun, but once born it is best to pass the gates of Hades as quickly as possible and to lie under a large heap of earth” [Trans. Gerber 1999 Loeb 258]), as well as Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus* lines 1225-6 (*μὴ φῶναι τὸν ἅπαντα νι//κᾷ λόγον*· τὸ δ', ἐπεὶ φανῇ, // βῆναι κεῖθεν ὅθεν περ ἤ//κει πολὺ δεύτερον *ὥς τάχιστα*. – “Not to be born comes first by every reckoning; and once one has appeared, to go back to where one came from as soon as possible is the next best thing.” [Trans. Lloyd-Jones 1994 Loeb 21]).

⁴⁰³ Obscure, possibly from θάπτω.

⁴⁰⁴ = ταλαίπωρος.

It is in every way best for all the beings that live various lives in the cosmos to have not been born at all, but those that have been born should go to the grave as swiftly as possible, forgetting all suffering and dreadful misery, how numerous are the fruits of life!”

So he spoke, and I said this in reply, and my translator Franta translated my words for me:

“ I have come, lord, to grasp your knees, and beg you greatly to give us a prophecy as a prophet about Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. He stole it, brooding in the depths of his heart, and is carrying it across the hollow and boundless expanse of the silent universe, threatening to destroy everyone with his careless mind.”

... and I told him in detail about all these things that concerned the sheep, and I sought the man’s advice with much begging. The dead man gave a terrifying laugh and replied with this speech:

“Why, homunculus, do you wish to save this cosmos alone? There are so many of them that they can’t be counted.

Ἡμέτερος κόσμος δ' εἷς εἶν πολέεσσι τέτυκτο
καὶ πολ' ἀνάξιος αὐτὸς ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ περ ἔασι
πληρεῖς εἰσι πάθης ἰδὲ δὴν καὶ ἀθλιότητος
ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς οὐκ εἰσὶ τε καὶ μούνους φανέουσιν. (285)

Νήπιος ἔσσω ὧς ξεῖνε κάμων περὶ πῆμασι κόσμον.
Ἀλλὰ γέ τοι ἐρέω μάντευμα⁴⁰⁵ ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ οἶω
μαντοσύνης πυρῆνα⁴⁰⁶ λάβειν· ἀποφώλιος ἔσσι.⁴⁰⁷
Μανδὺν καὶ μῆλον δ' εὐρήσετε τοῦ ἐπὶ κόπρου
καὶ χρυσοῦ· μακρὸς τε⁴⁰⁸ ὄμβριμος οἶμος περ ἔσται. (290)

Οὐδ' ἄρα μὴν γε λάβοιτ' ὑμῆς χρερσὶ στιβαρῆσιν
μὴ πρὶν χρονονόρην ὕλην γε διάνδιχα κέρσαι.
Τοῦτο δὲ τοι μάντευμα σαφές· ἑά με κάθευδεν.»
Ὡ φάτο μαντεύσας καὶ οὔτι τὸ πλεῖν ἐλόγιζεν
ἐγγεφάλου⁴⁰⁹ περ (295)

ὄϊκτρομένου⁴¹⁰ καὶ λισσομένον τε,
μούνως κερτομίας φαύλας καὶ κοπρολαλίας.
Ἄμμες σφάλμα φέροντές ἐ μὲν πάλι κρυστάλλονδε
ἄψ' ἔθεμεν κοτέοντες ἐπεὶ ἄμμ' οὔτι δίδαξεν
καὶ μὲν εὐξέστην ἐπιβήσαμεν ἡῦα νῆα
ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον μήνην ξείνην λελιπόντες. (300)

⁴⁰⁵ Křesadlo has written μάντευμ', but this seems like a spelling mistake.

⁴⁰⁶ Πυρῆν literally means the core or stone of a fruit, but it is also where Křesadlo's word for 'nuclear' (πυρηνιακός) comes from, so it could be translated here as 'nucleus'.

⁴⁰⁷ cf. *Odyssey* 8.177

⁴⁰⁸ It's a little unclear here what Křesadlo has written (it looks like τεξ'); it could be a possessive dative enclitic form of σύ.

⁴⁰⁹ = ἐγκέφαλος.

⁴¹⁰ Obscure.

But our cosmos has been fashioned as one amongst many, and quite worthless by itself since there are indeed many that are full of misfortune and long-lasting suffering, but even so, there only seems to be a single one. You're a fool, o alien, suffering because of the pains of the universe. But I shall give you my oracles, but I don't think that you will grasp the core of the prophesy, since you lack the brains. You will find Mandys and the sheep in the dung and gold: it will certainly be a long and burdensome road. But you won't grasp it in your strong hands, not before you cut the time-bearing material in half. These are your wise prophecies, now let me sleep."

So he spoke, giving his prophesy, and didn't say anything in addition (even though we begged his brain to feel pity), except only cheap mockery and shit-talk. As we endured our failure, we put him back in the ice, begrudgingly, since he didn't tell us anything. And so, we boarded our well-constructed ship and flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien moon behind us.

Book I

[Τὰ περὶ κερκοφόρων γυναικῶν καὶ ψευδοκύνων]

Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθυσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Πλανήτης μὲν αὖτις ἀφικόμεθ' ὃ περ ἔναιεν
 ὄντα εὐκότα τῇσιν ἐπιχθονιῇσι γυναιξίν
 ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ χαριές περ ἔεσκεν αὐτόθι μεῖναι. (5)
 Τὸν μὲν βιοφόρον γε διαὶ γνῶμεν ἐνὶ κόσμῳ
 τόνδε διαγνωτὸν πλέομεν πότι καὶ δέ τ' ἄνωθεν
 ἐσσύμενοι ζαπέδῳ ἔχομεν καλεργέα νῆα.
 Αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ νηϋφίν⁴¹¹ γ' ἐτάρων τρίας ἄλτο χαμᾶζε.
 Τὴν μὲν ἐγὼ πύθεσθαι ἐνὶ πλάνῃ ἀπόπεμψα (10)
 αἵτινες οὐσῖαι εἶην χθονὶ βρώματ' ἔδονται
 εἰ μὲν ἀγριόθμοι ὑπέρφιαλοί τε κακαὶ τε
 ἡὲ φιλόξεinoi καὶ θυμόν δ' ἡδὺν ἔχουσαι.
 Οἱ μὲν ἐρχόμενοι οὐ περ νόστησαι ἐταῖροι
 μακρῇσιν ὥρησιν ἐγὼ δέ τ' ἔβην σκοπέεσθαι. (15)

⁴¹¹ cf. note on *Astr.* 8.23.

Book 9

[The events concerning the tail-bearing women and the fake-dogs]

From there, we sailed in the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. Then we arrived at a planet on which lives beings that resembled women from Earth, but it wasn't pleasing for us to stay there. Then we determined that it could support life in the cosmos, so we sailed there once we'd discerned it and driving down from above we moored the beautifully constructed ship on the ground. Immediately three of my companions leapt down onto the ground from the ship. Whom I sent out onto the planet to investigate what sort of food-eating beings there are in the land, and whether they're wild minded, arrogant, and base, or friendly and kind-hearted. My companions who went out didn't return for a long time, so I went out myself to find out.

Βῆν ἵμεν ἐκ νηὸς καὶ ἐγὼν ἱμάντι τοῦ ἥγου
 Φράντην θαυμαστὸν πάσων μεταθήτορα γλώσσων
 καὶ πλάνην ξεινόν γ' ἄτοπόν τε τέθηπα βαδίζων.
 Φύλλα γε τῶν δένδρων πλανήτη ἐρυθρά τοι ἦσαν
 ὥς ἐπὶ τῆς Γαίης ὀξύια δένδρα πέλονται (20)
 τὰς βροτοὶ ἄνθρωποι χαλκηρείας⁴¹² καλέουσιν
 ἀλλὰ γε χόρτος ἔην πλάνη κύανός τε μέλας τε
 οὕτως χρώματα ξεῖν' εἶχεν χθὼν θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι.
 Καὶ μοι ἐρχομένου μὲν εὐκτίμενον φάνει' ἄστν
 βῆν ἵμεν πρὸς πτολίεθρον ἐγὼ καὶ Φράντα ῥοβώτης (25)
 ἀσβέστη πολυπρηγμοσύνη μ' ἔχε θυμὸν ἀγαινὸν
 αἵτινες οὐσίαι εἶην χθονὶ βρώματ' ἔδουσαι
*[ἦέ μὲν γ' ἀγριόθυμοι ὑπερφιαλοὶ τε κακαὶ τε
 ἦέ φιλόξεينوι καὶ θυμὸν ἡδὺν ἔχουσαι].*
 Αὐτίκα δ' εἰς βέρεθρόν τι (30)
 πέσον καὶ Φράντα ῥοβώτης
 κλάδοισιν πολλοῖς φαύλως κεκαλύμμενον ἦεν
 πηγὴ τις ἔμεναί γε δοάσσατο τῇδ' ἐνὶ θῆρες
 ἀγρότεροι λήφθησαν ἐπεὶ φόβος ἐστὶ μάχεσθαι.
 Ταύτη τῇ πηγῇ λήφθη Φράντης καὶ ἔγωγε
 ἀλλὰ τὸ καὶ πολὺ αἰπὺ ἔην βέρεθρον κακοέργον, (35)
 οὐδ' ἦν τις πρῆξις ἔ γ' ἀπέρχεσθαι δύναμιν τε.

⁴¹² Often used in Homer as an epithet of weapons, e.g., *Iliad* 4.469, 13.650, 18.534 etc., *Odyssey* 5.309, 9.55, 11.40 etc.; an ὀξύα can also refer to a spear-shaft, which make the epithet a fitting analogy.

I went to leave the ship, and I led Franta on a leash, our wonderful translator of all languages, and gazed in wonder as I walked around the alien and extraordinary planet. The trees' leaves on the planet were red, like how on Earth there are beech trees that mortal men call 'brass-tipped', but the grass on the planet was blue and black, such strange colours did the land have, a wonder to behold. And a well-built city appeared to me as I walked, then I and the robot Franta went to go to the city, since an unquenchable curiosity took hold of my noble mind to find out what kind of food-eating beings there are in the land [whether they are wild, arrogant, and base, or friendly and kind-hearted]. But then the robot Franta and I immediately fell into a chasm that was concealed roughly with numerous branches, it seemed to be the kind of trap that wild beasts are caught in when there is fear in fighting them. Franta and I were caught in this trap, but it was a very steep chasm, an evil work, we had no method or power to get out.

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐθέλον καλέσαι ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
 ῥαδιοφώνω ἐμῷ· ἔλιπον δέ ἐ νήπιος ἔνδον
 νηὸς εὐξέστης τὸ γὰρ οὐκ ἦν σχῆμ' ὑπαλῦξαι
 ἀλλὰ δὲ ὥς ἔπεσεν Φράντης τὸ μέλαν βερέθρονδε (40)
 τούτου βέβλαφέ μιν πτῶσις βιοραδιόφωνον
 πολλάκι νῆα κάλεσκεν ἀτὰρ μὰψ πάντα τέτυκτο.
 Εἰν πυθμῆνι δ' ἐγὼ ἐζόμην, πολὺ μῆδετο θυμὸς
 καὶ δέ τε μοι φρονέοντι διχῇ ἀναφαίνετο βουλή·
 Ἦ Φράντην ῥόβοτον βάλεμεν βερεθρήματος ἕξω (45)
 καὶ πέμψαι πλοῖονδε λάβειν ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
 ἦδ' αὖ κλιμακτῆρ' ὀρύσαι φείσρῳ ἐνὶ πέτρῃ
 καὶ μιν ἀπερχόμενον πηγὴν λυγρὴν ὑπαλῦξαι.
 Ἔνθα δέ μοι φρονέοντι δοάσσατο κερδίον εἶναι
 κλιμακτῆρ' ὀρύσαι καὶ μὴ Φράντην γε βάλεσθαι (50)
 μὴ ῥιφθεὶς πέτρῃ γε βλαβήσοιτ' ἀρχιμεθήτωρ
 παμπόλλων γλώσσων· ῥίψεος πολὺ τίμιος ἦεν,
 ἀλλὰ γε λυγροφόρῳ φείσρῳ πέτρην περ ὀρύσαι
 κλίμακα δ' ἐργῆσαι καὶ ὥς πηγὴν ὑπαλῦξαι.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πρὸς χεῖλος ἔβην πηγῆς πολυπύκρου (55)
 γούμωσις⁴¹³ φείσρου μοί γ' ἐφθίφθην ἐνὶ ὄπλῳ
 οὕτως δ' ἄνοπλος τέτυκον βήσεις ὀρύσας περ.

⁴¹³ = γόμωσις.

I then wanted to call my trusty companions on my radiophone, but I – fool that I am – left it behind inside my well-polished ship. So, there was no way to escape, but when Franta fell into the black chasm, he broke his biological-radiophone by falling. He would often call the ship, but it was all in vain. My mind was planning what to do most of all as I sat at the bottom, and a plan revealed itself to me while I thought in two parts: Either to throw the robot Franta out of the chasm and send him to the ship to get our trusty companions, or to dig out the rungs of a ladder in the rock with my phaser and escape the baneful well by climbing up it. Then, it seemed better to me as I thought to dig out the rungs of a ladder and not throw Franta, in fear⁴¹⁴ that my chief-translator of numerous languages might break by being hurled at the rock. He was too valuable to be thrown, it was better instead to dig out the rock with a phaser that brings misery, and to make a ladder and thus climb out the trap. Then when I stepped up towards the edge of the very pointy trap, the loading mechanism of my phaser stopped working in the weapon, and so I became unarmed, though I had already dug out the steps.

⁴¹⁴ I've added the 'in fear that' comment to get across that this is a fear clause.

- Ἄλλ' ἦμος μὲν ἄνοπλος ἴφυν⁴¹⁵ ἄσιμος⁴¹⁶ καὶ ἄφρακτος
 ἐκ πόλεός γ' ἦλθον πρὸς πηγὴν θήλεα ζῶα
 γυνακέσσιν ἐπιχθόνιοις μάλ' εὐοικάτα μορφήν (60)
 καλῆσιν ἐϋτύκτῃσιν τὰι χάρμα ἴδεσθαι
 μηρούς καὶ κνήμας ἄμφω θήλα γε ὑπερθεν
 ἀλλὰ γε τῆς οὐραὶ περ ἔσαν καὶ οὐατα μάκρα
 ὀξέα ὡς θηρῶν ἢ τῶν σατύρων⁴¹⁷ ἐπὶ Γαίῃ
 τῇσιν δ' ἐσθῆτες μὲν ἔσαν δίφθρης⁴¹⁸ μελάνησιν (65)
 ἀργύρεοις ἥλοισι πεπαρμέναι ἀλλὰ ποσὶν γε
 κρηπίδας δ' ἐπὶ γοῦν εἶχον πτέρνας τε ζαμηκεῖς.⁴¹⁹
 Αἱ μὲν ἀγειρόμεναι στῆσαν πηγῆς ἐνὶ χεῖλει
 αὐτὰρ δ' ἀλλήλης ἔπεα πτερόεντα πρόσενδαν⁴²⁰
 ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα· (70)
*«Οὐκ ἀρεῖα κακὰ ἔργα ἐπεὶ δ' ἕτεροι γε λάβοντο
 πηγῇ ἡμετέρῃ κύνες ἀργοὶ θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι
 τούτων εἷς μὲν ἐστὶ ἐὼς τρεῖς τὸν ἔχομεν νῦν
 ἀλλ' ἕτερος ξεινός γε κύων καὶ θαυμάσιος τε.
 Τοὺς νῦν εἰς κοράμην οἰσώμεθα ὡς ἐπέοικεν (75)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ πρὶν κύνας ἀρῶμεν βάθεος δνοφέροιο.»*
 Τοῦτον κερκοφόροι κοῦραι εἶπον γ' ἔπος αὐταὶ
 ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων φήμην μετέθηκε.
 Αὐτίκα δίκτιον⁴²¹ ἰσχυρόν γε βάλον ἐνὶ πηγῇ
 καὶ ἐμὲ καὶ Φράντην ἦραν ὡς τέλμασι ἰχθύν. (80)

⁴¹⁵ = φῦν (φύω) (?)

⁴¹⁶ = ἀσινής (?)

⁴¹⁷ Referencing human/animal hybrids present in Classical mythology.

⁴¹⁸ = διφθέρα.

⁴¹⁹ = διάμηκος (δια/ζα).

⁴²⁰ = προσεννέπω (?)

⁴²¹ = δίκτυον (υ/ι).

But when I became unarmed, harmless, and defenceless, female creatures came to the trap from the city, in form they closely resembled Earthly women that were beautiful and well-built, they were a joy to behold. There was a breast above their thighs and calves, but they had tails and long ears, pointy like those that belong to beasts or to satyrs on Earth, and once they'd assembled, they stood at the rim of the trap, and then addressed one another in winged words, but my translator Franta translated their words:

“There should be no threat of evil deeds, since other wild dogs have been captured in our trap, a wonder to behold; one of them is like the three whom we currently have in our possession, but the other dog is strange and marvellous. We shall now bring them to our queen, as is proper, but before that we should lift these dogs out of the murky abyss.”

The tail-bearing maidens said this speech, but my translator Franta translated their words.⁴²² They immediately cast a strong net into the trap and lifted me and Franta up like fish from a pool.⁴²³

⁴²² Φήμη can also refer to an oracular utterance, which ties into the connection between interpreting languages and mediating between the mortal and divine spheres through interpretation.

⁴²³ This evokes fish related similes in the *Odyssey*, especially 22.383-389, but also 10.124.

- Ἡρᾶσαι⁴²⁴ πεδίονδ' ἦρξαν δ' ἐσθῆτ' ἀποδῦναι
καὶ γυμνώσασαι στρέπτον δ' ἄμφ' αὐχένα σχοινὸν
καὶ με ἀνάγκησαν φοιτᾶν πισύρεςσι ποδέσσι
ὥς δε κύνες ποιουσὶ τε καὶ ἦγον ποτὶ ἄστν
ἀχνύμενον· μάλα γάρ περ ἀτίμιον ἔσκε μολεῖσθαι. (85)
Τὸν Φράντην ἦγον δ' ἵμαντί γε τῷ καὶ ἐγὼ μιν
ἦγεσθαι ἐπείωθα ἕως ἄρχων κόραμός τε.
Νῦν μὲν νῶϊ ἄμφω τρόχeton πισύρεςσι ποδέσσι
ἴσω γ' ἀλλήλοιν· στρέφεται γέ τυχῇ πολύμητις.⁴²⁵
Αἶ μὲν ἐρχόμεναι ἀγόρευον δ' ἄμφις ἐμεῖο (90)
[αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκα ἅπαντα]
«ὦ ποποῖ ὡς ὃδ' ὀχεντα⁴²⁶ κύων ἡῦς τε μέγας τε
πάμπολλοις κῶλοις ὥσπερ γ' ἄρσῃν' ἐπέοικεν
οὐρῆς μὲν δέεται ἀλλ' οὔτινος οἶα μέγιστα.»
... καὶ νῦν μῦθησαν τὰ γὰρ αἰδέομαι καταλέξαι. (95)
«Ἄξιός ἐστι ἀμῆς βασιλείης ἀρχικύων ὥς.
Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐγὼ ἴσῃ γ' ἐθέλωμι λάβειν τε δέχεσθαι
δῶμα φυλασσέμεναι καὶ ἐμοὶ λέχος ἀντιοῶσαι
οὐδ' ἄρα βλάξ ὁ κύων δοκεεὶ γε νοήμασιν εἶναι
ἀλλ' ἐπιδέξιός ὢν τάχα κεν τέχνας⁴²⁷ γε μαθήσῃ. (100)

⁴²⁴ Obscure, possibly from αἰρέω.

⁴²⁵ Odysseus' epithet, lit. 'of many tricks/devices', e.g., *Odyssey* 2.173, 4.763, 5.214, 7.207, 8.165, 9.1, 11.354, 13.311, 14.191 etc.

⁴²⁶ From ὀχεύω.

⁴²⁷ A bit of a double meaning here with a *techne* being a 'trick' that you'd teach a dog, but Oudeis is also very good with *technai*, scientific 'technologies'.

Once they'd taken me to the plain, they began to take off my clothes, and once they'd stripped me naked, they forced a collar made of twisted reeds around my neck, and forced me to walk on four legs, like dogs do, and they led me to the city. Grieving, because it was very dishonourable way of going, and they led Franta with the rope that I was accustomed to lead him with as his ruler and master. Now we both walked on four legs, in the same position as one other: this is how tricky fate is turned. Then as they walked, they talked about me [while my translator Franta translated everything]:

"Oh dear! This lusty dog is beautiful and large in a great number of his limbs, as befits a male, he lacks a tail but nothing of great importance."

... And now they spoke about things that I'm ashamed to describe in detail:

"He's worthy of being our queen's top dog. But I for my part would want to receive this same man in marriage, and let him keep my home safe, as well as meet me in bed. This dog also doesn't seem to be slow of mind either but is a clever man who can learn tricks quickly."

Ναὶ γὰρ τοί μοι τέρψις εἴη κύνι παιδεύεσθαι
 ὁζὺν ἵμαντα ἐχούσῃ ἐπεὶ γλουτὸν πυκὸς ἐστι
 τούτῳ μὲν ποινὴ δ' εἴη κυνὶ εἴκοσι πέντε
 ἀλλὰ δέ μιν μισθὸν γε δίδοιμι λέχος ἐπιβῆναι
 καὶ κεν ἐγὼ μιν αὖτις.»⁴²⁸ (105)

... τόδ' αἰδέομαι καταλέξαι.

Αὐτὰρ ἀκουσάντος περ ἐμοῦ Φράντου μετὰθεντος
 πορνολαλείων κούρων σὰρξ αἶψα ὄρωρεν.
 Ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἔνωρτο γέλως φαύλῃσι γυναιξίν
 ὥς ἴδον οἷα δ' ἐγὼ κρῦψαι ἴν' οὔτιν' ἔχεσκον.
 Αὐτίκα κερκοφόρους προσεφώνεε μία γυναῖκας (110)
 καλὴ καὶ μεγάλη κοράμη εὐκυῖα⁴²⁹ κοραύνῃ·
 »Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων πᾶσαι ἐρίηρες ἐταῖραι⁴³⁰

οὔδ' ἄρα δεσποίνῃ μὲν ἀπειραστὸν κύνα δοῖμεν
 ἀλλ' ἐπέοικέ ἐ πειράζειν καὶ ἐὺ μεμαθῆναι.
 Κοίλῃ μὲν κεῖται ἐρατὴ προπάροιθεν ὁδοῖο (115)
 τὴν δ' εἰσβαίνουσαι – ἐπεὶ οὔτις ἐκεῖ σκοπεάσει –
 τὸν κύνα πειράσωμεν ἐπεὶ γινῶναι δέον ἐστί.«
 ὦ φάτο· αἱ μὲν πᾶσαι ἔβαν κοίλῃς ποτὶ βένθος
 ἀλλὰ τὰ λοιπὰ δ' ἐγὼ νῦν αἰδέομαι καταλέξαι

⁴²⁸ This last clause features a subject and an object, but no verb, so it translates literally as 'I would do [blank] to him', which is a nuance lost in English.

⁴²⁹ = εἰκυῖα (υ/ι).

⁴³⁰ *Hetairai* is often used in Classical literature to refer to 'courtesans', i.e., female companionship; this doesn't seem to be the intended meaning here, but Křesadlo does seem to want the reader to make this connection, due to the reference to prostitution in line 108 (πορνολαλείων); *hetairai* are also commonly used in late antique literature as tools for evoking Classical Athens (see my essay *Hetairai-A.I.: Cyborg Courtesans and the Desire for the 'Ideal'*), so there is a possible meta-literary reading here around New vs. Old.

Yes, for it would be a joy to educate you, dog, with your sharp leash, because you've got a fat arse. The penalty for this dog would be twenty-five lashes,⁴³¹ but I would give him the reward of boarding my bed, and then I would..."

I'm ashamed to describe this in detail. But when I heard what Franta was translating from the sex-babbling girls, my flesh suddenly became excited. Then unquenchable laughter arose amongst these vulgar women, since they could see what I could no longer hide. Immediately one of the women addressed the tail-bearers, she was beautiful and tall, who resembled a regal maiden:

*"Listen to my words, all my trusty companions: let us not give this dog to our queen untested, but it is fitting to try him out and learn all about him. A lovely valley lies before our path, which we are entering – since no one will see us here – and we shall put the dog to the test, because we must know him carnally."*⁴³²

So she spoke, and all the girls went towards the bottom of the valley, but the I am currently too ashamed to tell you the rest in detail.

⁴³¹ The Greek doesn't specify lashes, but it seems implied.

⁴³² cf. note on *Astr.* 5.140, the *aliens made them do it* trope.

ἀλλ' ἔνιαι ἔθελον καὶ Φράντην πειράζεσθαι (120)

τὸν μὲν κερκοφόροι σκύμνον καλέοντο γυναῖκες.
Οὐδ' ἄρα τῷ Φράντῃ ροβότῳ ἦν μήδεα φωτὸς
ἀλλὰ γε πλαστὸς ἔτυκτο μεταφρήσειν πολὺ ῥῆμα
καὶ μιν τὴν μορφήν σκουνκὸς παίζοντες ἔθηκαν.
Αἱ μὲν ψαύουσαι Φράντην (125)

μέλος⁴³³ οὐκ ἀνάψαυσαν
καὶ ὥς ἄρχηστον⁴³⁴ κταμέναι ἔθελοντο κόραυναι.
Ἀλλὰ δὲ τῇσιν ἤρξε λαλεῖν ἰδίῃ ἐνὶ γλώσση
ψυχὴν λισσόμενος καὶ ἐρμήνευεν⁴³⁵ ἅπαντα.
Αἱ μὲν θαυμάζοντο ἐπεὶ σκύμνος ἐλάλησεν
ἀλλὰ δὲ κερτομέουσαι ἔφαν Φράντῃ πολυγλώσσῳ· (130)

«Εἴ περ σκύμνε πέπον⁴³⁶ κτιμενὸς δ' εἴ εἵνεκα γλώσσῳ
μούνῃ σῇ γλώσση ἡμῖν πόρε ἔργα ἐρώτων.»
Οὐδ' ἄρα Φράντα μεταφρήζων βουλὴν ἐνόησεν
κουράων· ἀπλοῦς γε σοφὸς καθαρὸς περ ἔεσκεν.
Ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ γλώσση τῇ ἡμετέρῃ κατέλεξα (135)

[τῇσιν κούρησιν μὲν ἔην ὀλόλυγμα κυνωδὲς
οὐδ' ἄρα Φρανκίσκος μ' εἶπεν τὴν φῆμιν ἔχοντα]
καὶ μὲν πειθόμενος πόρε τῇσιν ἔργα ἐρώτων
ἢ ἔκων ἢτ' ἀέκων· ρόβοτος⁴³⁷ πλὴν χάρματος ἔσκεν.

⁴³³ This line can have meta-poetic resonances, since the noun *melos* also describes a genre of poetry, *melic poetry*.

⁴³⁴ The verb *χράσμαι* can be used to describe a man 'using' a woman for sex.

⁴³⁵ A fitting word for 'explaining' in relation to Franta, since the same verb also means 'interpret, translate'.

⁴³⁶ Cf. LSJ s.v. *πέπων* II.1, "metaph., as always in Hom. (more freq. in Il. than in Od.), and in Hes., in addressing a person, mostly as a term of endearment or familiarity, **kind, gentle**".

⁴³⁷ It's worth remembering that the word 'robota' in Czech means 'slavery'; this scene may remind the reader of Seneca *Natural Questions* 1.16 on Hostius Quadra and the use of sex-slaves.

But some of them also wanted to put Franta to the test, whom the tail-bearing women called the 'puppy'. But Franta the robot had no male genitalia, because he was predominantly manufactured to translate speeches, and they jokingly gave him the form of a skunk. They felt no limb when they touched Franta, and so the girls wanted to kill him for being useless. But he began talking to them in their own language, begging for his life and explaining everything.⁴³⁸ They were amazed when the puppy talked, but they tauntingly said to Franta the polyglot:

"If, gentle puppy, you were constructed for the sake of tongues, then grant us erotic deeds with your tongue alone."⁴³⁹

But Franta the translator did not understand the girls' intention, since he was just an expert, plain and simple. But I fully explained to him in our own language [it was just dog-like barking to the girls, since František didn't tell them that I could speak too], and, obeying, he granted them erotic deeds, willingly or unwillingly; since as a robot he lacked the sense of pleasure.

⁴³⁸ A synthetic being begging for its life raises interesting questions about the extent to which Franta is *just* a tool for translation.

⁴³⁹ The pun here is that *glossa* means both 'tongue' and 'language', so they are asking Franta to perform cunnilingus on them with his single tongue, i.e., 'monolingually'.

Οὕτως εἰν κοίλῃ εἰς ἡέλιον καταδύντα (140)
[ζεῖνον καὶ ἄτοπον οὐδ' αὖ ὥς μητέρι Γαίῃ]
 σὺν κούρης φαύλῃσι ἐπρήξαμεν οἷα θέλον περ
 σχήμασι ποικιλοέσσιν ἕως τὰς θυμὸς ἄνωγεν
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατέδου φοῖβος⁴⁴⁰ καὶ ἐπὶ κνέφας ἦλθεν
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ δυνάμην πόρρῳ πόρνευμ' ἐπιείχειν (145)
 ἀλλὰ μὲν εἰν πεδίῳ προπετῆς ἦν ἡὔτε νέκρος.
 Τῇσιν ἔπειτα ἔπος φάτο ταύτῃ μία γυναικῶν
 εὐτύκτη μεγάλη κοράμη εὐκυῖα κοραύνῃ·
«Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων πᾶσαι ἐρίηρες ἐταῖραι·
οὐ γὰρ νῦν θέμις ἐστὶ φέρειν κύνας πρὸς βασιλείῃν (150)
ὥς καὶ νῦν κνέφας ἐστὶ κύνες δὲ κεκμηκότες εἰσὶ
ἀλλὰ γε τοὺς σταθμόνδε κυνῶν διὰ νύκτα βάλοιμεν
οἴκῳ ἡμετέρῳ δοῖμεν βρώμην τε πόσιν τε.
Ὅρθρου μὲν λούσασαι ἐπεὶ πόρνησιν ὄζουσιν
εἰς βασιλείον δῶ σκυλάκῃ⁴⁴¹ μὲν οἴσομεν ἄμφω. (155)
Ἀλλ' ἴομεν σταθμόνδε ἐπεὶ πολὺ ὄψιαί εἰμεν.»
 Ἥ ῥα γυνὴ κοράμη· ταὶ δ' ἐξαπίνης ἐπίθοντο
 εἵματα δ' ἔνδυσαν καὶ στρέπτοὺς ἄμμι διδοῦσαι
 φοιτῶν πρὸς μέγα ἄστν· τὸ λάμπετο νυκτὶ φαεινόν.
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' εἰς δῶ κοράμης μὲν ἀφικόμεθ' αὐτῆς (160)
 αἶδε βάλον σταθμόνδε μετ' ἄλλους τοὺς κύνας εἶχεν.

⁴⁴⁰ *Phoibos* is an epithet commonly given to Apollo, and refers through metonymy to the sun; it's interesting that this alien sun is being referred in a way that is usually reserved for our own sun, or a Greek god.

⁴⁴¹ Dual of σκύλαξ.

And so, in the valley until the setting of the sun [alien and extraordinary, not at all like on Mother Earth] we did whatever they wished with the vulgar girls, in the numerous ways that their hearts compelled them. But when the bright one had settled and darkness had arrived, I couldn't put up with the fornication anymore, and I fell onto the floor instead, like a corpse. Then one of the girls gave them a speech, she was well-built, tall, and resembled a regal maiden:

"Listen to my words, all my trusty companions: for it is not proper to bring these dogs before the queen right now, since it is currently dark and the dogs are worn out, but let us throw them into the kennel⁴⁴² for the night, and let us give them food and drink in our home. And at daybreak, once we've washed them (since they stink from fornication), we should bring both the dogs to the regal palace. But we should head to the kennel, since we're very late."

So the woman in command spoke, and they obeyed on the spot; they put on their clothes and gave us our collars as we hurried to their great city: it shone brilliantly in the night. But when we arrived at the home of their ruler, they threw us into a kennel where they kept us with the other dogs.

⁴⁴² Lit. 'lodging for dogs', i.e., a kennel.

- Οὐδε κύνες αὐτῶν τοῖς ἡμετέροισιν ἔοικαν
 ἀλλὰ πολὺ ξεῖνοι καὶ αἰσχροὶ καὶ τερατώδεις.
 Λίσσοι μὲν πάντες κούρων ἦσαν κύνες ἀργοὶ
 ὥς μὲν ἄνθρωποι ἢ σῦες πηλοφιλοῦντες (165)
 καὶ εἶχον κεφαλὰς ὡς Γαίῃ ἡμιπιθηκοὶ
 τοὺς καὶ ζωολόγοι φῶτες καλέουσι *λέμουρας*
 οὐατα τοῖς ἦσαν περιμηκέα ὀξέα δ' ἄκρις
 καὶ τοῖσι μὲν ἔοικε τὰ⁴⁴³ κοῦραι ἔχον ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 κέρκον ἔχον τοι ἕκαστος ἔπειτ' ὥς κοῦραι ἔχοντο (170)
 μακρόν τ' ἢ ὀλίγον ψεδνὴ οὐρῇ φύτο λάχνη.
 Κῶλα δὲ τοῖσιν ἔην οὐκ ὡς κυσὶ ἀλλὰ μάλιστα
 τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἀναλίγκια αἰσχροὶ ἴδεσθαι
 χεῖρες ἢ πόδες ἰδὲ μήδεα φωτὸς ὕπανθεν⁴⁴⁴
(θηλείας δὲ κύνας μετὰ τοῖσιν οὐκ ἑώρακα) (175)
 τόδ' ἔδραμον σταθμοῖο κύνες πισύρεσσι πόδεσσι
 καὶ μὲν ἀφικομένων ἡμῶν θεοῦ ἄντι πύθεσθαι
 παμπολλοί· μοι δ' αὖτε κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ.
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' ψευδόκυνες πλάνου περ μνησαν ὄλεθρον
 ἀλλ' οὐρῇσι ἐῴσι περισαίνοντες ἔβησαν (180)
 ὥς μ' ἀσπάζοντες καὶ ἥρξαντ' ὀσφάζεσθαι⁴⁴⁵
 ὥς ἦθος κυσὶν ἐστὶ πυγῇ καὶ ἄλλὰ γ' ὁμοῖα

⁴⁴³ Obscure what exactly the comparison being made here is

⁴⁴⁴ = ὑπένερχε (?)

⁴⁴⁵ = ὀσφραίνομαι.

None of their dogs seemed like ours, but were very alien, as well as ugly and monstrous. All the agile male dogs were bald like humans are, or mud-loving pigs, and have heads like those half-apes on Earth that zoologists call 'lemurs'; their ears were very long, and the tips were pointy, and they resembled those things that the girls in the land had, since each one had a tail like the girls have, long or short, and scant fur grew on the tail. Their limbs were unlike a dog's, but very much like those that belong to humans, which was disgusting to behold, they had hands, feet, and male genitalia underneath them (I didn't see any female dogs amongst them). These dogs were running around the kennel on four legs, and once we'd arrived, many of them ran opposite us to learn who we were, but my dear heart shattered in turn. But the planet's fake-dogs didn't mean us harm, instead they came over wagging their tails as if they were greeting us and began to sniff my bottom, as is the custom for dogs, and other similar things.

ἀλλὰ μὲν ὀρθήσας ὡς ἀνθρώπους ἐπέοικεν
 τοὺς δ' αὖ ψευδόκυνας σκεδάσας πέμψ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλον
 οὐ πῶς ἀγριοέργοι ἔσαν κύνες τοῦ πάλιν αὖτε (185)
 ἥμεροι ἢ φοβεροὶ δύποδας δείδοντες ἅπαντας.
 Εἰν ἐδάφει προπετῆς εὖδον κεκμῶς⁴⁴⁶ ὑπὸ κούρων
 οὐ μὲν ψυχρὸς ἔην γυμνῷ περ νυκτὶ μελαίνῃ
 θερμὸν εἶχον ἀῆρα γυναῖκες κερκοφόρευται.
 Ἐξαπίνης σταθμόνδ' ἦλθεν γρηῤῥ τις ἀεικῆς (190)
 μάσθλητ' ὅξυν ἔχουσα κυνῶν ἀλκτῆρα καὶ ἀνδρῶν
 ἀγγεῖον φορέουσα καὶ εἰς πύελον κατέχευεν
 βρώμην αἰσχροτάτην· ἐπὶ τὴν δὲ πέσοντο⁴⁴⁷ κύωνες
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼν ἐθέλοιμι πάσασθαι πυελολάπτων
 ἀλλὰ με βελτίον ἦν τλῆναι λιμὸν δακογάστρον (195)
 μούνον ὕδωρ καθαρὸν βρύσηφι⁴⁴⁸ δ' ἄφυσσα φαεινῆς
 δίψαν γ' ἠκεσάμην λύμφην Φράντη καὶ ἔδωκα.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα Φράντα μεταφρήζων ἐδέετο ἐδωδῆς
 ἀλλὰ δέ οἱ τρόφιμον σύστημα συνισμένον⁴⁴⁹ ἦεν
 μούνω μὲν τρέφετο σμικροῖς τρόφιμοις χαπίοισι (200)
 καὶ οἱ ἔν χαπίον γ' ἐξάρκετο μῆνα ἅπαντα
 ἀλλὰ πίνειν δέον εἶχεν· ὃ σαρκόπλαστος ἔτυχτο.

⁴⁴⁶ = κάμνω.

⁴⁴⁷ = πίπτω.

⁴⁴⁸ From the modern Greek word for 'tap', βρύση.

⁴⁴⁹ cf. note on *Astr.* 1.190.

But, having stood up straight, as befits a human, and scattered the fake-dogs, I sent them in all directions. The dogs weren't wild by any means, on the contrary, they were tame and timid, afraid of all two-legged creatures. I slept face-down on the floor, worn out from the girls, and I didn't find it cold in the nude during the black night, since the tail-bearing women had a warm climate. Suddenly, there came to the kennel some ugly old woman, who was holding a sharp whip that wards off dogs and men, and carrying a pail, and poured down into a trough the most disgusting food, but the dogs threw themselves on top of it. I, however, wouldn't wish to derive sustenance by slobbering over a trough, rather it seemed better to me to suffer the hunger that bites my stomach, and I drew only pure water from the radiant tap and quenched my thirst and gave water to Franta. My translator Franta didn't need food, but his trophic system was stunted, so he could only gain sustenance from small food pills, and one pill was enough for him for an entire month, but he still had to drink, since he was made out of moulded flesh.

Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ἀκέων μὲν ἔφυν ὕδατος ἀπὸ βρύσης
 εἰν ἐδάφει προπετῆς εὖδον κεκμῶς ὑπὸ κούρων
 αἶψα δέ μοι γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἐπιπτεν (205)
 οὕτως εὐδόμενός⁴⁵⁰ γ' ἔτλην εἰς ἡόα διάν.

Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδακτυλος ἡὼς
[ζεινιακὴ οὐ πως τῆς ἡμετέρης εὐκυῖα]
 ἦλθεν εἰς σταθμὸν κούρη κοράμη καλίπυγος
 ἄλλαι δ' αὖτε κόραι κύνες (210)
 αὖτ' ἐπέσυντο⁴⁵¹ πρὸς αὐτάς

κέρκοις σαίνουτες καὶ ὀξέα ὑλακώοντες
 καὶ τῆσιν μέμααν μηροὺς ἄνα χερσὶ βάλεσθαι
 ὥς γε κυσὶν ἦθος· ταὶ μᾶστιξιν ὀλοῇσιν
 πλῆξαν· οἶδε κύνες ἀργοὶ σκεδάσαντ' ἐνὶ στάθμῳ.
 Αἱ μὲν δ' αὖτε λάβουσαι ἐμὴν ἴν'⁴⁵² ἢ γ' ἐτάροιο (215)
 αὐτοὺς εἰς πολέονδε βάλλον τινὰ ἢ σκαφίδ' ἄλλην
 πλείην τοῦ ὕδατος θερμοῦ καὶ λοῦσαν ἕκαστον.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ξεράνησαν⁴⁵³ ἀμᾶς ὀθόνησι καλῆσιν
 στρεπτοὺς ἀμφέβαλον δ' ἀμφ' αὐχέα ὥς τὸ πάρος περ
 ἵμασι καὶ ἦγον βασιλείης εἰς μέγα δῶμα (220)
 καὶ μὲν τὸν Φράντην ἦγον σὺν ἐμεῖο ῥοβώτην.

⁴⁵⁰ = εὖδω.

⁴⁵¹ = προσπίπτω + tmesis.

⁴⁵² ἴς here refers to the whole body, cf. Cunliffe Homer s.v. ἴς 5.

⁴⁵³ = ζηραίνω.

But when I quenched my thirst by bringing out water from the tap, I slept face-down on the floor, worn out from the girls, and sweet sleep immediately fell upon my eyelids, and so I endured, sleeping until the bright dawn. But when Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [a strange one that didn't resemble ours at all], the beautiful-bottomed girl in charge and the other girls came to the kennel, and the dogs prostrated themselves before them, wagging their tails and giving piercing howls, and were eager to embrace their thighs with their hands, as is the custom of dogs. They struck with their deadly whips, and the swift dogs in the kennel scattered. And once the women had taken hold of me and my companion again, they threw us into some great tub that was full of warm water, and washed each of us. But when they dried us off with beautiful cloths, they put on collars around our necks as they did before, and they led me on a leash to the great palace of their queen, they also led Franta the robot along with me.

Ἦ μὲν ἐξομένη θρόνῳ ἦν μέγα σιγαλοέντι
 σκῆπτρον χερσὶν ἔχουσα τε καὶ κεφαλῇ διάδημα
 ἠὺς καὶ μεγάλη κῦδος δέ ἐ κρᾶτα κάλυπεν
 πρόφρων τὰς κατέδεξεν ἔπος ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε. (225)

Οὐ γὰρ πάντα ἐγὼ τὰ λελεγμένα εὖ ἐνόησα
 [Φράντα μεταφρήζων γε σίωπησεν βασιλείῳ]
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι ἱκανῶς σάφα εἴσατα οἶα τέτυκτο.

Ὡς αἱ μὲν μ' ἔδοσαν βασιλείῃ ἠὔτε δῶρον
 ἀλλὰ γε τὸν Φράντην μίῃ κούρῃ περ ἔδωκαν (230)
 ἢ τῆς δεσποίνης ἐτάρῃ⁴⁵⁴ τ' ἰδιαιτέρῃ⁴⁵⁵ ἔσκεν

καὶ δέ με νῦν δμῳαὶ ἦγον εἰς χαλκοβατὲς δῶ
 δεσποίνης καὶ μὲν μ' ἔβαλον εἰργμόνδε φαεινὸν
 ἔνθα δέ κατοίγνυν δῶσαν βρώμηυτε πόσιν τε
 ἀμφὶς δ' ἐζόμεναι ἐόρακαν ἠὲ κάχαζον (235)

ἀλλὰ δέ μοι οὐκ ἦν μεταθήταρ Φράντα ἀμύμων
 τῶν δμῳῶν κούρων μῆτιν μῦθον τε νοῆσαι
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτεν
 πολλὰ δ' ἐγὼν ἔκαμον χθιζὸς κεκμῶς ὑπὸ κούρων.
 Ἑσπέραι δ' ἦλθον καὶ μ' ἐξ ὕπνοιο ἔγειραν (240)
 καὶ μ' ἦγον δμῳαὶ εἰς βένθος δώματος αὐτῆς
 καὶ ἐκεῖ ἔθηκαν δεσποίνης εἰν θαλάμοισιν.

⁴⁵⁴ Could very possibly have the sexual connotations of *hetairai* as a 'courtesan'.

⁴⁵⁵ From the modern Greek for 'female private secretary', ἰδιαιτέρα.

She was sat on an exceedingly shiny throne, holding a sceptre in her hands and a diadem on her head, she was beautiful and tall, and glory covered her head; she readily admitted them and addressed them in a speech. But I couldn't understand quite everything that was said [my translator Franta kept quiet in the royal palace], but it was clear enough for me to figure out that what was happening was that they had given me as a gift to their queen, but gave Franta to a single girl who was the queen's companion and personal assistant. And maids now led me into the queen's bronze-floored home, and threw me inside a radiant cage, and they locked me in there and gave me food and drink. Then as they sat around, they watched and mocked me, but I didn't have my excellent translator Franta, so I couldn't understand any of the maids' words. But sweet sleep immediately fell upon my eyelids, since I was very tired after being worn out the previous day by the girls. They came in the evening and woke me from my sleep, and the maids led me into the depths of her house, and place me there in the queen's bedroom.

- ἤλθεν εἰς θάλαμον αὐτὴ δέσποινα γυναικῶν
 ἦρξε δὲ γυμνᾶσαι μορφὰς θήλεις προφέρουσα
 γυμνωθεῖσα ὅλη κάλτσας⁴⁵⁶ περ χρῶι ἔασεν (245)
 οἶον πορνάων ἦθός περ ἐστὶ μελαίνας⁴⁵⁷
 καὶ κάλεσεν ἦλθιν ὥς καὶ σκύλακας καλέουσιν
 παντοίῳ κόσμῳ· τὰδ' ἐγὼ κραιπνῶς ἐνόησα
 σχήματι τῷ τὰδ' ἐφη βουλὴν αὐτῆς ἐνόησα
 ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὴν πισύρεσσι πόδεσσι βαδίζων (250)
 οὐτὶς μὲν μ' ἐβίαζεν ἀτὰρ νῦν ἦνδανε θυμῷ
 εἶναι ὥστε κύων γε γυναικείων ἔνεκ' ἔργων.
 Ἦ μὲν οὐκ ἔασεν ὀρθῶς φιλότῃ μιγῆναι
 ἀλλὰ γὰρ μοι πολὺ ἔργον ἔφη πρῆξαι παραγωγῇ
 τῇ μὲν ἔγωγε πέποιθα ἐπεὶ μοι ἦνδανε θυμῷ (255)
 πάντα τὰ μὲν βούλησε. Τόδ' αἰδέομαι καταλέξει.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ εἶλεν μάσθλητ' ὄξον πολυπικρὸν
 ἦρξε δὲ μαστίξαι ὥς λάγνος μὲν μιν ἄνωγεν
 τοῦνεκ' ἀναίξας ὀρθῶς ὥς ἄνδρ' ἐπέοικεν
 μάστιγ' ἐκ χειρός περ ἐρυσσάμενος κακοέργου (260)
 τὴν μὲν δέσποιναν βέβαλον εὐνήνδε καλήνδε
 πρηνέα καὶ οὐρῆς μάρψας σκαιῇ στιβαρείῃ
 δεξιτερῇ μὲν πλῆξα πυγὴν μάστιγι φαεινῇ
 κυριακῇ τῇ μαστίξαι πάντας ἐπείωθεν
 δμῶας καὶ ἐτάρας ἰδὲ θήρας ψευδοκύωνας. (265)

⁴⁵⁶ From the modern Greek word for 'sock, stocking', κάλτσα.

⁴⁵⁷ n.b. the enclosing word order of κάλτσας... μελαίνας.

The queen of the women entered the bedroom herself, and began to strip herself naked, displaying her feminine shapes, and when she had completely undressed, she let her black socks stay on, which is the custom of prostitutes, and summoned me to come in the way that people also summon puppies all across the cosmos.⁴⁵⁸ I quickly understood this, since I realised that the manner in which she spoke revealed her intention, so I came to her, walking on four legs, no one forced me, but it pleased my mind now to be just like a dog because of the women's deeds. She didn't allow me to mingle with her in love straight away, but she said I had many actions to perform in a perverse manner, which I obeyed, since everything that she wanted pleased my mind. I'm ashamed to describe this in detail. But then she took the sharp and very painful whip, and began to whip me, just as her lust had encouraged her to do, and so, having stood up straight, as befits a man, and taken the whip from her hand that does evil, I threw the queen head-down onto her beautiful bed and caught hold of her tail with my strong left hand, and with my right hand I smacked her bottom with the radiant, lordly whip, which she was accustomed to whip everyone with, including her maids and companions, as well as those animals, the fake-dogs.

⁴⁵⁸ Humorous comparison: summoning Oudeis to come to her in a cutesy way as if he were a puppy.

Ἄσβεστίη δέ με εἶλε μένος τίσευς περὶ πάντων
 οἷα ταπεινωθεῖς γε πάθον κούρων ὑπὸ χειρῶν.
 Ἦ μὲν οὐ φύλακας ἐκάλησεν πότνα γυναικῶν
 ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ παραγωγιῇ τάδε ἦνδανε θυμῷ.
 Σμερδαλέως ἰάχησε κόρη καὶ μακρὰ βόησε (270)
 ἀλλὰ μὲν οὐχὶ κάλησε κόρας κώδωνι φαεινῇ
 τῆς σπάρτη κατακρήμνη⁴⁵⁹ ἐὴν αὐτῆς ὑπὲρ εὐνῆς
 σῆμα σαφές γε τέτυκτο⁴⁶⁰ κόρης ὡς ἦνδανε θυμῷ.
 Αὐτὰρ ἔγωγε τέταρπα πυγὴν πλήξας εὐτύκτην
 πυκνὴν καὶ παχέτην πάσων τὸ χάρισμα γυναικῶν (275)
 ὡς οἱ σμῶδιγγες τοι αἶξαν ἐν χροῖ λευκῷ
 εἰς τέλος ~ πορνεύειν σημαίνησεν καὶ ἄνωγεν
 ἀλλὰ γε ταῦτα γε πάντα μὲν αἰδέομαι καταλέξει.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πότνη λάγνον γ' ἠκήσατο⁴⁶¹ κούρη
 μειλίχιος μ' ἔπεσιν μύθῳ τινὶ νῦν προσέειπεν (280)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼν οὐκ οἶδ' ἰδιώματα κερκογυναικῶν
 καὶ οἱ σημαίνησα⁴⁶² ἐνέγκαι Φράνταν ἀγανόν.
 Αὐτίκα σπάρταν ἔρυσεν ἐνὶ κώδωνι φαερνῇ
 καὶ ἔφανεν φυλάκεσσα γυνὴ καὶ μὴν γ' ἀπόπεμψεν.
 Ἐξαπίνης νόστησε κόρη Φράντην φορέουσα. (285)

⁴⁵⁹ = κατακρέμαμαι.

⁴⁶⁰ The connection of the verb τεύχω to signs may remind the reader of Aratus' *Phaenomena* (e.g., τετυγμένα σημαίνουιν, line 12).

⁴⁶¹ = ἀκέομαι.

⁴⁶² This is another example of the need for an interpreter in many epic encounters, cf. *Astr.* 5.311-316.; the role of semiotics and communication, translation especially, is very common throughout the *Astronautilia*, see my note on *Astr.* 3.192 for my explanation of a connection to Zeus' divine *pneuma* in Aratus' *Phaenomena* (in a way, Franta is like the computer in book 5, but more effective, since he is a machine that interprets 'signs', i.e., languages).

And I was seized by an unquenchable anger to get vengeance for everything that I'd suffered when I'd been violated at the hands of the girls. She, the queen of the women, didn't call for her guards, but rather it pleased her mind because of its perversity. The girl gave a fearful cry and a mighty shout, but she didn't call for any girls with her radiant bell, whose rope was dangling above her bed: it was a clear sign that it pleased the girl's mind. But I also rejoiced, smacking her well-formed bottom, which was fat and thick, the delight of all things that belong to women, so that bruises shot up on her white skin. In the end ~ she gave me signs and encouraged me to fornicate with her, but I'm ashamed to describe all these things in detail. But when the queen had satisfied her lust, she now addressed me in some speech in soothing words, but I didn't know the language of the tailed women, and gave her signs to fetch the brilliant Franta. She immediately pulled the rope on the radiant bell, and a female guard appeared and then she sent her away. Suddenly the girl returned, bringing Franta along with her.

Ναὶ γὰρ καιρὸς ἔην ὥς ὑστερον εἶπε ῥοβώτης·
 Ἦδε γυνὴ ἰδιαιτερίῃ ἡμός γ' ἐνόησεν
 Φράντην οὐκ ἔχεμεν ὥς ἦθος μήδεα φωτὸς
 τὸν ὥς ἄχρηστον κτάμεναι πόρε τῆς φυλάκεσσι
 ἀλλὰ ἐπὶ κτάμεναι δέσποιν' ἴση ἐσάωσεν. (290)
 Αὐτὰρ νῦν δέσποιν' ἦρξεν μῦθον καταλέξαι
 θαῦμα ἄκουέμεναι καὶ μακρὸν χρῆμα ἄπιστον
 τῶν μὲν ψευδοκύνων αἰνίγματα ἢ γυναικῶν.
 «Οὐ τοί εἰσι κύνες ἀλλ' ἄνδρες ἡμέτεροί τοι
 δυσγενέες τοὺς αὐτε κύνας καλέουμεν ἅπασαι (295)
 οὗτοι μὲν μωροὶ ὥς θῆρες πάντες ἔασιν
 καὶ τοὺς νῦν ἔχομεν ὥς θρέμματα⁴⁶³ εἵνεκα χάρμης
 τέρψεος ἢ λάγνοιο ἐπεὶ κρατέειν χάρις ἐστὶν
 ἀρσῆνεσσιν πᾶσι τε τοῖσιν πῆμα φέρεσθαι
 καὶ τοῦ ὀχευέμεναι⁴⁶⁴ ἔνεκεν καὶ μαχλοσύνης⁴⁶⁵ τε (300)
 καὶ τε τέκειν κούρας μικρὰς καινοὺς σκύλακάς τε
 εἵνεκα τῶν μὲν ἔασιν γυναιξὶν ψευδοκύωνες.
 Τῶνδε παρελθόντων καὶ παλαιοτάτων ἐνιαυτῶν
 ἡμῖν ἄνδρες ἔσαν καὶ ὥς σὺ ῥήματ' ἔχοντες
 ἢ νόον καὶ ὀρθοβάτεις ἴσοι τε γυναιξὶν (305)
 καὶ οἱ δ' ἄμμι' ἄνδρες τεχνήματα πολλὰ τέτευχαν
 ἀλλὰ δέ τ' οἱ φῶτες κράτεον θήλεσσι γυναιξίν.

⁴⁶³ A *thremma* is also a term for a domestic slave; also, the keeping of humans as pets may remind the reader of the Roman *puer delicatus*, a slave boy kept as a pet, cf. Statius *Silvae* 2.1, 4, 5, & 6.; a human zoo is also a common sci-fi trope, cf. Star Trek TOS pilot episode, “*The Cage*”.

⁴⁶⁴ Articular infinitive.

⁴⁶⁵ Used in the *Iliad* once to describe Paris' judgement, cf. 24.30.

Yes, since it was the perfect time, as the robot told me later: when the personal assistant realised that Franta did not have the usual male genitalia, she sent him to the guards for them to kill him for being useless, but before they could kill him, the same queen saved him. But now the queen began to deliver a speech, a great wonder to hear; it was about an unbelievable matter, namely the riddle of the fake-dogs and the women:

“They are not dogs, but our husbands, we all call them ‘degenerate dogs’. They’re idiots, like all beasts are, and now we keep them as pets, for our enjoyment, pleasure, and lust, since it’s a delight to rule over all males and inflict pain on them. As well as for the sake of breeding and fulfilling our lust, and to produce little girls and new puppies, which is why the fake-dogs belong to women.⁴⁶⁶ In bygone and very ancient years, we had husbands that were also capable of speech like you, as well as reason, and walked upright like women, and these men constructed many devices for us, but these men also ruled us delicate women.

⁴⁶⁶ Could alternatively be translated as ‘*belong to their wives*’, since *gyne* can mean both ‘*woman*’ and ‘*wife*’.

- Ὡρσε δέ τις κούρη καὶ τὴν στάσιν ἦρξε προφῆναι
 τὴν πρὶν κερτόμεον ἴσως ἄνδρες τε γυναῖκες
 ἀλλὰ βάδην πολλὰ ἐπευφήμησαν ἑταῖραι (310)
 ἄνδρας ἀνατρέψαι τε γυναῖκας ἡγεμονεῦσαι.
 Καί γε βάδην τε βάδην τούτων αὐξάνειτ' ἀριθμὸς
 τῆμος τῆς στάσεως ἦρξαν ἰδὲ καὶ νενίκηκαν.
 Ἀλλὰ τοι ἀρχαῖοις τοῖς ἡμασι εὐφρονες ἦσαν
 ἄνδρες ἢ γυναῖκες ἐπεὶ δημόκρατοι ἦσαν (315)
 καὶ τε πολὺ πρότεροι τεχνήματα πολλὰ ἔχοντες.
 Τῇδε πόλει ἀμῇ γε διάντριχα δαίατο λαός.
 Τῇσι δὲ νικητῆς γ' ἔσθην γενέα δυο χώρη
 αἱ μὲν λεσβιακαὶ ἔχθραι ἄνδρασιν ἅπασι
 αἱ δὲ φιλανδρίαὶ καὶ τοῖς κρατέειν ἐθέλουσαι (320)
 σὺν τῇσιν δ' ἦσαν παῦροι ἄνδρες μασοχίσται
 οἳ μὲν δηθηθῆναι γε θέλον θήλεσσι γυναιξίν.
 Ἄλλοι καὶ νόμιμοι ἦσαν γ' ἄνδρες τε γυναῖκες
 οἳ δ' ἔθελον ζῆναι ὥς πρὶν καὶ ἄνδρας ἀνάσσειν.
 Τοὺς νομίμους δ' ἔασαν λείπειν εἰν νηϊ μελαίνῃ (325)
 ἀστροπορευέμεναι ὥς ἔχθραι τοῖσι πέλοντο.

But a certain girl rose up and began calling for a rebellion. Men and women alike sneered at her originally, but all her comrades gradually shouted out their approval to overthrow the men and that women should be leaders.⁴⁶⁷ And gradually the number of these women increased step-by-step, until they began the revolution and won. But men and women were kind-hearted in those ancient days, since there was a democracy, and these very early peoples had many technologies. The people in our city were divided into two groups. There were two types that won the land: the lesbian women who hated all men, and the heterosexuals who also wanted to rule them, amongst them there were a few masochistic men who wanted to be dominated by effeminate women. But there was also ordinary men and women, who wanted to live as before and for men to be in charge. And they allowed the normal people to leave on a black ship to journey amongst the stars, since they hated them.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁷ This is likely inspired by the contemporary third wave feminist movement in the early 90's.

⁴⁶⁸ A form of political exile, which is potentially reminiscent of Křesadlo's own exile from Czechia.

Ἀλλὰ τε δ' ἀνδροδάμειαι ἐπεὶ δίχα τμημένοι ἦσαν
 αἱ μὲν λεσβιακαὶ αἱ δ' ἀνδροφίλαι κρατέουσai
 αἱ νῦν κληροῦσαν κληροῖς κοῦραι τανύπεπλοι
 καὶ τῆς λεσβιακῆσι πέσεν πλάνην ἀπολεῖψαι (330)
 ἐξαπίνης λέλιπον τὸν πλάνην πουλυβότειρον
 ἡμεῖς δ' αὖτι μένουσαι ὅλον πλάνην κρατέουμεν.

Καὶ γε βάδην τε βάδην μέτα δ' ἄνδρες ἄμμι ἔβαλλον⁴⁶⁹
 καὶ γέγονον μῶροί τε τετράποδες ὥστε κύνες περ
 τοῖσι δὲ τερπομένοι κρατέουμεν ψευδοκύνεσσιν. (335)

Ἀλλὰ μὲν ἐφθίθην τεχνήματα πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα θηλότεραι δέομέν ῥα νόοιο γυναιῖκες
 ἀλλὰ γε δεξιότητος ὑπαί τινος ἔργα πέλονται
 μηχανικῶν τέχων ἄλλων ἀνδρῶν ἰδὲ ἔργων.
 Αἱ γὰρ λεσβιακαὶ ἀνδρεῖον νοῦν περ ἔχονται (340)

τὸν γε λίπον πλάνην καὶ ἄνδρες δυσγενεοῦντο.
 Οὕτως καὶ γνώσις τέθνηκεν κοσμοπορεύειν
 ἀλλὰ γε καὶ τέχναι τὰς πρὶν ἔχομεν ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 Οὐδ' ἄρα τοί γε λέγειν δύναμαι ἡμῶν περὶ ἀνδρῶν
 ἢ ῥα μετὰλλαξις γ' εἴη φύσει αὐτοματὴ τοι (345)
 ἢ περ μηχανικῇ τέχνῃ πυκινῶς ἀραρυῖα.

⁴⁶⁹ Μεταβάλλω is also a technical word for translation.

But since the conquerors of men were split in two, with the lesbian women and the heterosexuals in charge, the girls with the flowing robes now cast lots, and it fell to the lesbian women to abandon the planet; they immediately left the much-nourishing planet, and we stayed behind to rule the entire planet. And gradually our men transformed little by little, and became idiots and four-legged just like dogs, and we joyfully rule these fake-dogs. But many fine technologies have stopped working. We females don't lack reason as women, but rather the sharpness of mind which the works of mechanical technologies as well as the other works of men have come into being from. For the lesbian women possessed the mental ability of men, which has abandoned the planet and the men have degenerated. And so even the knowledge of how to journey across the universe has perished, as well as the technologies that we previously possessed in the land. I'm unable to tell you about our men: whether it was a spontaneous mutation in their nature, or cunningly contrived through mechanical skill.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁷⁰ i.e., was it a normal genetic mutation, or was it genetically engineered.

Μωρή μὲν ἔνεστιν ἐνὶ χρομοσῶματι φωτὸς
οἷφ βιολόγοι δ' ὅ τοι ψιλὸν οὖνομ' ἔδωκαν
ὥς μὲν ὅταν τέτυκεν φῶς ἄρσην νήπιός ἐστι
ὥστε κύων κεφαλῇ καὶ τετραποδός γε βαδίζει. (350)

Ἀλλὰ γέ μοι στυγεροί περ ἔφυν κύνες ὥς παρακοῖται
ὥς νῦν ἄνδρ' ἔγνω νόμεμον καὶ μῆτιν ἔχοντα
καὶ ὥς τοῦ κρατέειν γλυκερώτερόν ἐστι κράτεσθαι
ἀλλὰ σε νῦν ἐθέλοιμι μένειν καὶ μοι πόσιν εἶναι
ἴφι δέ μοι κρατέειν τε τέκειν σοφὰ ἄρσενα τέκνα.» (355)

Ἦ ῥα γυνὴ δέσποινα τέ μοι πότι χεῖρας ὀρέγνυ
ἀλλὰ μοι ἀσπαστόν γε δοάσσατο κοιμηθῆναι·
λοξὴν μὲν μάρψας – σμῶδιγγες γὰρ χροὶ ἦσαν
ἦρξαι δέ μιν πείρειν καὶ πρῆξαι πρηγματ' ἐρώτων.
Ἄλλ' ἐπεὶ ὀργασμὸς μὲν ἐμοὶ ἰδὲ καὶ τέλος ἦλθεν (360)

ἅμφ' εὐνὴν εἶδον στήναι ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
πάντας τοὺς φυσικοὺς ἄνδρας πλαστούς τε ῥοβῶτας
τοὺς κάλεσεν Φράντης ῥόβοτος βιοραδιοφώνω
βλῆμά γε τοῦτο τὸ πάθε πέσων εἰς χάσμα ἦσεν
ἴφι βίου αὐτοῦ τ' αὐτῆς κρατερῆς φυσεός τε (365)

~ σαρκοπλαστάων ῥοβότων τόδε κέρδος ἔνεστι ~
ἦμος Φράντ' ἔγνω ὥς ἀσκηθῆς πάλιν ἔσκε
αὐτίκα νῆα θοὴν κάλεσεν καὶ πάντες ἐταίρους
οἳ μὲν ἐπεσσύμενοι φεῖσροισι λυγροῖσι μάχοντο
καὶ μέ τε καὶ Φράντην καὶ ἄλλους τρεῖς ἐσάωσαν (370)

Idiocy is ingrained within the men's chromosome that biologists give the name 'Y', so whenever a male is born, he is an idiot, with a head like a dog's and he walks on four legs. But I find these dogs abominable when in bed with them, since I have now known a normal man who also possesses intelligence, as well as because it feels more pleasant to be conquered than it is to conqueror. But now I would wish for you to stay behind and be my husband, and rule me by force, and bear me smart male children."

So the queen spoke, and stretched out her hands towards me, and it seemed welcome to me to sleep with her: and grabbing her side – for there were bruises on her skin – I began to penetrate her and do erotic deeds. But when my orgasm finally came, I saw that all my trusty companions were standing around the bed, men produced by nature and manufactured robots, whom the robot Franta had called with his biological-radiophone, since the wound that he had suffered by falling into the chasm healed by his life's force and the power of nature itself ~ robots that are made out of moulded flesh have this advantage ~ when Franta realised that he was healthy again, he immediately called the swift ship and all our companions who rushed ahead and fought with their deadly phasers, and saved me, Franta, and the three others.

Οὔτοι ἄλλοισιν σταθμοῖς κούρων περ ἔχοντο.
 Ἄλλ' ἔτι καὶ δυνατὸν ὥς εἰν κούρησι λείπται
 ὕψιλόν ὥς νόμιμον καὶ ἀγλαὰ ἄρσενά τέκνα
 ἦν ἕτερος πλάνης τῷ σπέρμα λέλοιπα καὶ ἄλλοι
 ὥς ῥα τύχη τεῦξεν ναυτῆρας ἀστροόχευτας. (375)
 Τούτων γηθόσυσοι ἐπιβήσαμεν ἡῦα νῆα.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν πλοῖον ἀπὸ χέρσου
 ἑπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες.

They were the ones who were held in other kennels by the girls. But still, it was also possible that the Y in the girls was left as normal and that beautiful males could be born. This was the other planet which I and the others left our sperm to;⁴⁷¹ thus fate made us star-stud sailors. Rejoicing at this, we boarded our beautiful ship. The rocket immediately propelled the vessel from the land, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind us.

⁴⁷¹ The previous planet they had done this for previously was the planet of degenerates at the end of book 5.

Book K

[Τὰ περὶ τῶν μακροπόδων⁴⁷² καὶ Μανδύος συλλήψεως
καὶ φυγῆς]

- Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτά γ' ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
τῷ δ' ἐγγὺς τύχομεν τοῦ Μανδύος εἶναι ἀνάνδρου
μήλου κοσμοθεωροῦντός τε· τόδ' οὐκ ἐνόησα
ἄρχος ἐγὼν τ' οὔτις πάντων ἐτάρων ἐρίηρων.
Τὸν μὲν βιοφόρον γε διαὶ γινώμεν περὶ κόσμῳ (5)
καὶ δὲ διαγνωτὸν πλέομεν πότι καὶ δέ τ' ἄνωθεν
ἐσσύμενοι ζαπέδῳ ἔχομεν καλεργέα νῆα.
Ἐνθα γε ζῶα ἔναιεν ὅμοιά τε μακροπόδεσσι
τοὺς μὲν καγγαροὺς τοὶ ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν
ἄνδρες ἐπιχθόνιοι πάντες πλὴν τῶν Βοιοήμων (10)
οἱ μὲν μακρόποδας κλοκάνους κλῆσιν κάλεουσι
τούτοισιν θῆρες πλάνου μὲν ἐοικότες ἦσαν
ἀλλὰ γε γνωμονικοὶ ἦσαν ὥσπερ βροτοὶ ἄνδρες.
Οὐδε τε μακροπόδεσιν ἔσαν οἴκοι εὐτυκτοὶ
ἀλλὰ γε οἱ περ ἔναιον ἐνὶ σπῆσιν γλαφυροῖσιν (15)
ὥς μὲν πρωτόγονοι φῶτες γαίηθιν εἴωθαν
καὶ οἱ πῦρ γινῶσαν θερμοὺς χειμῶνι ἔχεσθαι
ἀλλὰ γε τοῖς βοτάνη βρώσις μὲν ἦν προβάτων ὥς.

⁴⁷² *Macropus* is the taxonomic genus name for certain marsupials such as kangaroos and wallabies, lit. 'long-foot'.

Book 10

[The events concerning the kangaroos, as well as Mandys' arrest and escape]

And then we arrived at a planet after swimming amongst the stars, where we happened to be near the cowardly Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. But I, the captain, was unaware of this in the beginning, nor were any of my trusty companions. We determined that it could sustain life in the cosmos, and so we sailed there once we'd discerned it and darting to the ground from above, we moored the beautifully constructed ship. On it there lived creatures that resembled macropods, which are called 'kangaroos' by all men on the Earth, except for the Bohemians,⁴⁷³ who call macropods 'klokani'.⁴⁷⁴ The animals of this planet resembled these, but were intelligent like mortal men. These kangaroos had no well-built houses, but rather lived in hollow caves, just as the first men were accustomed to do on Earth. They also knew that fire kept them warm in the winter, but their diet was grass, like a sheep's.

⁴⁷³ i.e., the Czechs.

⁴⁷⁴ Singular = *klokan*.

- Οἶδε ποτῆτ' εἶχον ζυμωθέντος γε γάλακτος
 τὴν μὲν ὥς οἶνου ἰδὲ ὥς βρύθον πίνον αἰεῖ. (20)
 Οὕτως μεθισθέες γὰρ ἔησαν ἤματα πάντα.
 Θῆρες τοῖς γάλα δῶκαν ἐοικότες ἡμετέροισιν
 μήλοισιν οὐπὲρ διάφορμον γνώριμον ἔσκεν.
 Ἀλλὰ γε μακρόποδες οἷας αὐτὰς ἐτίμησαν
 καὶ φάσκον προβάτων πάντων θεῖον γένος εἶναι (25)
 ὥς μὲν δωτῆρες τοι ἔσαν οἶνοιο γάλακτος
 καὶ τὸν μακρόποδες θεῖον πότον ὥς τετίμηκαν,
 τέρψεος ὥς κρουνόν τε δ' ἄκος πάντων γε κακῶν τε.
 Τοῦνεκα λάτρευνον μήλοισιν ἐλκοπόδεσσιν.
 Τοῖσιν οὐσίαι περ ἔσαν χαλεπαὶ διαγράξαι (30)
 οὐτινὶ γ' οὐσίῃ μὲν ἐπιχθανίῃ ἐϋκυῖαι.
 Ταί περ ἔσαν σμικραὶ ὥς πενταετείς ἰδὲ παῖδες
 ὀρθοβάτεις δῦποδες καὶ ὥς τὰς χεῖρας ἔχουσαι
 χήλας σὺν ὀνύχεσσί τε καὶ μέλαναι χροῖ πρᾶσαι
 ἀλλὰ σφιν μὲν ἔσκε προβοσκίς ὥς ἐλέφασιν. (35)
 Τοὺς μὲν μακροπόδες θῆράς γ' ὥμοισι φέροντο
 καὶ θεραπεύοντες φάσκον σφε ἐπισκοπέδοντας
 οὐδε τ' ἐπισκοπέοντες ἐπισκοπέειν τί γ' ἔφαινον
 ἀλλὰ πολὺ βλακικοὶ καὶ ἄχρηστοί γε πέλοντο
 δυσγενέες· οἱ πρὶν μὲν ἄνασσον μακροπόδεσσιν (40)
 ἀλλὰ γε οἱ θεράπευον αἰεὶ μωρούς περ ἐόντας.

And they would have fermented milk as their drink, which they drink like the beer that a Briton is always drinking.⁴⁷⁵ And so they got drunk daily. The animals that gave them their milk were like our sheep, there was no recognisable difference at all. But the kangaroos honoured these very sheep, and claimed that every race of sheep was divine, since they were the givers of milk-wine, which the kangaroos also honoured as a divine drink, since it was a source of joy and a remedy for all kinds of ills. Which is why they served these sore-footed sheep with prayers and sacrifices. There were beings amongst them that are difficult to describe, since they don't resemble any Earthly being. They were small like five-year-old children, walked upright on two feet, and had something like hands, paws with claws and appeared dark in complexion, and they also had a proboscis like that of an elephant. And the kangaroos carried these beasts on their shoulders, and as they served them, and as they tended them, they called themselves 'inspectors', but these inspectors didn't seem to be inspecting anything. Instead, they were very stupid and useless degenerates, who once ruled the kangaroos, but they continued to serve them even though they're idiots.

⁴⁷⁵ i.e., they drink as much of this fermented milk as the English drink beer.

Ἀλλὰ δὲ πάντα γε ταῦτα μεμάθομεν ὕστεραν αὐτοί.
 Πρῶτα δὲ μακρόποδες ἦλθον μελάνην ποτὶ νῆα
 Πολλ' ἀσπαζόμενοι καὶ ξείνια προσαιτοῦντες
[γλώσση μακροπόδων· Φράντης μετέθηκε ἅπαντα] (45)
 οἷά γε πρωτότυποις πᾶσιν γὰρ ἦθος ἔνεστιν
 σύμπαντος κόσμου γαίῃ πλάνησί τε πᾶσι.⁴⁷⁶
 Τοῖς ἀνθρωπιάτιόν⁴⁷⁷ τι δεδώκαμεν ὥς ἐπέοικεν
 ἀλλὰ γέ τοι κάλεσαν ἡμᾶς οἶνοιο ὀνήσαι.
 Βῆμεν ἴμεν σὺν τοῖσι ποτὶ γλαφυρὰς σπήλυγκας (50)
 τῇσι δὲ μακρόποδες ναῖον καὶ μῆλα φύλασσον
 οὔδ' ἄρ' ἄνευ ὅπλων. ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν.
 Πάντες μὲν ἔχομεν κάψησιν ἀμύμονα ὅπλα
 οἷά τε συγγραφέες σαῖ-φαῖ *φείσρους* καλέουσιν.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ἴκομεν μὲν ἐνὶ σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσιν (55)
 ἐξῆς ἐξόμενοι πίνομεν ζεζυμωμένον οἶνον
 σὺν τοῖς μακροπόδεσσι· φιλόξεινοί τοι ἔεσκον.
 Καὶ τε βάδην οἶνος θυμὸν ἔλε τέρψεος ἄρχων
 ἥε φιλοφροσύνη θῆρας καὶ ἄνδρας ἅπαντας.
 Νῦν μὲν μακροπόδων ἄρχων ἦρξεν ἐπιζητεῖν (60)
(ταῦτά γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα)

⁴⁷⁶ The customs of *xenia* are common across the universe, but this doesn't mean that there can't be bad cases of *xenia*; just like in the *Odyssey*, which portrays a series of good and bad examples of *xenia*, both on the part of the guest as well as the host; part of *xenia* is the exchange of gifts.

⁴⁷⁷ Very obscure, the Czech says *cetka*, 'trinket', the closest ancient Greek word would be κόσμος, but that could be confusing in a sci-fi.

But we only found these things out later ourselves. The kangaroos first approached our black ship, giving us a very kind welcome and begged us for guest-friendship [in the language of the kangaroos, but Franta translated everything] as is the custom amongst all primitive peoples throughout the entire cosmos, including on our Earth and on all planets. We gave them some trinket as was proper, and they ordered us to enjoy their wine. We went out with them to their hollow caves which the kangaroos lived and guarded their sheep in, but not without weapons, as experience had taught us. For we had many excellent weapons in our pockets, the kind sci-fi writers call 'phasers'. But when we came to the hollow caves, we drank the fermented milk with the kangaroos once we'd sat down in a row, since they were friendly. And gradually the wine seized our minds as the instigator of joy,⁴⁷⁸ and friendship seized the animals as well all my men. Now the ruler of the kangaroos began to ask us questions (our translator Franta translated all of them):

⁴⁷⁸ The sense here is a little difficult to make out.

«Ὡς ξεῖνοί τινές ἐστε οἱ οὐρανόθεν κατάβαντες;
 ἢ θεοὶ μάκαροι ἢ καὶ βροτοὶ ἢ τε ἡμεῖς;⁴⁷⁹
 Εἶδε θεοὶ μάκαροι μυστήρια οἶδατε πάντα
 ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ θνητοὶ αἰέν γε σοφώτεροι ἡμῶν (65)
 ὥς νῦν οὐρανόθεν καταβήσατε νηὶ μελαίνῃ.
 Ἀλλὰ γε μοι ἄλλοις τέ γ' ἐνίσπετε μυστικά ἔργα
 οὐρανοναυτῶν καὶ μήλου ζωοδοτῆρος.
 Ἡμῖν μακροπόδεσσιν ἔην μάντευμα παλαιὸν
 ὥς μετὰ μήλοισι εἴη εἷς θαυμασῖος θῆρ (70)
 ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἅπας ἀρχὴν τε λόγον τε ἔχοιτο.
 Τοῦνεκα λατρεύομεν μήλων ὥς τῶν θεράποντες
 καὶ φύλακες· μακρός γε φόβος μήλου θανάτοιο
 παντὸς καὶ κόσμου· ἔνεκεν τῶν μῆλα σεβοῦμεν
 πάντα δ' ἴσως· οὐ γὰρ γνώμην ἔχομεν περὶ μήλου (75)
 τούτου κοσμοφόρου ὥς πάντα δέον θεραπεύειν.
 Ἀλλὰ γε τις ἦλθεν θεὸς ἄλλος ἢ βροτός τις
 οὐρανόθεν κατάβας ὥς ὑμεῖς εἵκελος ἄμμι
 ἄρτι· ὁ μῆλον ἐνεγκε λίπεν δέ ἐ εἰν οἷεσσιν
 τῆσιν ἡμετέρης τε πάλιν πτάτ' ἐς αἰθέρα δίαν (80)
 τοῦτό γε μῆλον ἐγὼν οἶομαι αὐτεντικὸν⁴⁸⁰ εἶναι
 μυστικά κοσμόφορον καὶ ἄξιον ἡὑσεβείης.⁴⁸¹
 Ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδαμεν ἅμμες ὅιν καὶ ἦτις ἢ εἶη.»
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀναξ θηρῶν καὶ Φράντα τὸ ῥῆμ' ἀπότηρευσεν.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ Having advanced technology makes you indistinguishable from a god: science is god, and the use of advanced technology makes one god-like; cf. note on 3.192, Weise 2024:272.

⁴⁸⁰ = αὐθεντικός.

⁴⁸¹ = εὐσεβεία.

⁴⁸² This verb isn't commonly used to mean 'translate',

“O aliens, who are you, who have descended from the heavens? Are you blessed gods or mortals as well, like us? If you’re blessed gods, then you know about all the secrets of the universe, but even if you’re mortal, then you’re still wiser than us, since you have now descended from the heavens in a black ship. But tell me and the others about the secret accomplishments of the sailors of the heavens and the life-giving sheep. Since we, the kangaroos, have an ancient prophesy, that there is amongst the sheep a single wonderful animal, from which the entire universe has its beginning and reason. Which is why we are devoted to sheep as their servants and guards. There is great fear that the sheep’s death would bring with it the death of the entire cosmos, we worship all sheep equally for this reason. For we have no intelligence regarding this cosmos-bearing sheep, so we must serve all of them. But some other god came, or some man, he descended from the heavens like you recently did. He carried a sheep and left it amongst our sheep and flew back into the divine atmosphere, I think that this sheep was the authentic one, the secret bearer of the cosmos and worthy of piety. But we don’t know which possible sheep it could be.”

So the lord of the animals spoke, and Franta translated the speech.

- Ἡμῖν πυθομένοισι μὲν ὄρνυτο θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ (85)
 γνωσάντων Μανδὺν καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Αὐτίκα τῷ κοράμῳ μορφῆς ζητήματ' ἔθηκα
 ἀνδρὸς κοσμοπορευτῆρος ὃς μῆλον ἔνεγκεν,
 αὐτὰρ μακροπόδων ἄρχων μοι ἀμείβετο μύθῳ·
 «Κυφὸς ἔην χολὸς δ' ἕτερον πόδα τῷ δέ τε κρᾶτον⁴⁸³ (90)
 λίσσον καὶ στροβιλώδες ἔην αὐτὰρ δέ τε ῥίνα
 πάμμεγαν αὐτὸς ἔχεσκε ἕως σύκιον ῥοδοέντα
 τῷ δὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμῷ σφαίρης μεγάλῃσιν ἐῦκτη.»⁴⁸⁴
 Ὡ φάτο μακροπόδων ἄρχων καὶ ἐγὼν ἐνόησα
 Μανδὺν ἐχθιστον πάντων εἰν ἄστει φωτῶν (95)
 οἵτινες εἰς φυλακὴν ἦλθον ὅτις ἐνορώσης.
 Αὐτίκα με φροντὶς ἔλε καὶ τρόμος ὥς ἐνόησα
 ἔγγυστον δ' εἶναι τῆς βαλβίδος ἀστροπορείης
 ὥς γὰρ ἐκεῖ μὲν ἔσκεν ὃς ἡ κοσμοθεωρῶν
 ταύτῳ τῷ πλάνῃ ἀλλ' ἥτις οὐκ ἐνόησα (100)
 οὐδ' ἄρα μακροπόδων μούνης τις οὐδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
 Μῆλον μὲν τὸ γὰρ ἔσκεν ἕως καὶ ἄλλα ἔασιν
 πανταχόθεν πάντης πολὰ πάεα ἵκετο μήλων
 οὕτως οὕτις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο τοῦ περὶ μήλου
 ἀλλὰ γε μακροπόδων κόραμος ἔπος ἄμμιν ἔειπεν (105)
 τὸν Μανδὺν σημῆναι ἐοὶ πρὶν νῆ ἐπιβῆναι
 ἄψ ἀπονοστηθήσεσθαι⁴⁸⁵ μέλλω ἐνὶ καιρῷ.

⁴⁸³ cf. note on *Astr.* 1.135: κυφός cf. *Odyssey* 2.16 of the aged Aegyptius; χολός δ' ἕτερον πόδα cf. *Iliad* 2.217 of the 'ugly' Thersites; κρᾶτον = κράς, i.e., κάρα (κέφαλη).

⁴⁸⁴ Almost the same as Mandys' initial description in book 1 at lines 135-139, except for the lack of the final comparison between his eyes to footballs, and the last two words here (μεγάλῃσιν ἐῦκτη) are slightly different to the previous description (μακρῇσιν ἐῦκτη), but have the same meaning.

⁴⁸⁵ = ἀπονόστησις + τίθημι.

Our courageous hearts stirred up as we listened, having gained knowledge about Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. I immediately put a question to the king about the form of the male cosmonaut who carried the sheep, and then the leader of the kangaroos replied to me in this speech:

“He was hunchbacked, lame in one foot, and his head was bald and cone-shaped, moreover, this man had a very big nose that resembled a red fig, and his eyes resembled large balls.”

So the leader of the kangaroos spoke, and I understood that Mandys, the most hateful of all the men in the city who had ever come into the guard of the perceptive sheep. Anxiety and trembling immediately seized me, since I understood that the end-point of our journey amongst the stars was close at hand, because the sheep who watches the universe was here on this very planet, but I didn't know which one it was, nor did a single one of the kangaroos or my men know. For this was a sheep like any other, and everywhere there came on all sides many flocks of sheep, and so no solution revealed itself to us concerning the sheep, but the king of the kangaroos gave us word that before he boarded his ship, Mandys had given them signs that he would make a return in the near future.

Ἐνθεν ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θέμενος ἐτάρων περὶ βουλῆς
 κέκρικα γ' αὖθι μένειν καὶ Μανδὺν φῶτα δέχεσθαι.
 Οὐ γὰρ λάθρα δύναται ἥλθειν εἰν νηϊ μελαίνῃ (110)
 εἰς πλάνην· κónαβός γε βαρὺς καὶ πῦρ προλέγοιτο.
 Τοῦνεκα μὲν μένεμεν εἰν θηρσὶν μακροπόδεσσιν
 μέθῃ ποταζόμενοι ζεζυμωμένον ἔκ γε γάλακτος
 καὶ ἔδυμεν τῦρον οἷον τὸν ἐτεύξαμεν αὐτοὶ
 ἢε τινας καρύας τοῖς καστῆνοις εὐκυίας (115)
*[οὐ γὰρ μακρόποδες θῆρες βρώμην τιν' ἔχουσιν
 ἀνδράσιν ἀρμοδίην χόρτον βοτάνην τε ἔδουσιν].*
 Οὕτως οἶνοποτάζοντες μένομεν κακόμανδυν
 καὶ σκοπίας θέμενοι μακρῶν ὀρέων σπιλάδεσσιν
 ἡμῶν ἢ καὶ μακροπόδον· ἐπίκειτο δ' ἀνάγκη. (120)
 Οὕτως μὲν μένεμεν δέκα καὶ πίσυρ' ἡματα πάντα
[μέτρῳ ἐπιχθονίῳ· πλάνῃ γε βραχίονα ἦεν].
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐπεὶ δεκάπεμπτον ἐνὶ χθονὶ φαίνεται ἡμαρ
 πλοῖον κοσμοπόρον μὲν ἐλεύσομεν ἀγχι πελάζειν.
 Μικρὸν μὲν σκάφος ἦν μούνου δ' ἀνδρὸς ἐπιβῆναι (125)
 ἀλλὰ γε ῥηϊδίον ἰδὲ καὶ ταχὺ κοσμοπορεύειν.
 Αὐτίκα νηὺς χέρσονδε πέσεν καὶ ἔμπεδ' ἔτυκτο
 ἔχθιστος Μανδὺς γ' ἀνέδῃ θύρηφι καὶ αὐτός.

Then, once I'd put a meeting together to get my companion's counsel, I decided to stay here and welcome Mandys. Because he couldn't come in a black ship to this planet secretly, since the weighty noise and fire would give warning. Which is why we stayed behind amongst the kangaroo animals, and as we drank the fermented wine that was made from milk, we also ate sheep-cheese that we made ourselves and some nuts that resembled chestnuts [for the kangaroo animals had no food that would be fitting for men, but ate grass and leaves].⁴⁸⁶ And so we awaited the evil Mandys as we drank the wine, and in the hollow rocks of the steep hills we established lookouts made up of ourselves as well as the kangaroos, as necessity demanded it. And so we waited for a whole fourteen days [by Earth's measurement, since this planet's were shorter]. But when it became the fifteenth day in the land, we saw that a space-faring vessel was drawing near. It was a small ship, and capable of carrying a single man, but capable of sailing across the universe quickly and easily. The ship immediately sank down to the ground and came to a stand-still, and then the very hateful Mandys himself emerged from the doors.

⁴⁸⁶ A group of sailors in a cave waiting for the return of a quasi-shepherd as they eat cheese is reminiscent of Odysseus and his crew waiting in Polyphemus' cave, eating his cheese (*Odyssey* 9.232).

- Ἦμῖν λευσομένοις γήθησεν θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ.
 Βῆ δ' ἵμεν πρὸς οἴας ἔλε μῖην οὐλοκάρηνον (130)
 καὶ πόδας οἱ μὲν ὀπισθίονας κρηπῖφιν ἔπηξεν
 καὶ θυλάκους⁴⁸⁷ καταδὺς Μανδὺς γ' αὐτὰς ἐπὶ κρηπῆας
 ἤρξε δὲ πορνεύειν προβάτω σὺν θαῦμα ἰδεσθαι.⁴⁸⁸
 Οὐ γὰρ κλέψεν οἷν γ' ἔνεκεν κοσμοὶ ἀπολώτεος
 ἀλλὰ ἐ μὲν κλέψεν ῥ' ἐρατῶν διὰ ἔργα ἐρώτων. (135)
 Ἦμεῖς ἐσσύμενοι ἔλομέν μιν ἡὲ τὸ μῆλον.
 Ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἔνωρτο γέλως πᾶσιν γ' ἐτάροισιν
 ἧς οἶος ἔνεκεν καὶ Μανδύος ὥς ἐ φίλησεν
 ἡέ ῥα καὶ τέλος κινδύνου ἡὲ πόνου τε
 ὥς ἔχομεν Μανδὺν καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν. (140)
 Οὕτως ἡμετέρη πέμψις τετελεσμένη ἦεν
 ἄμμι πάλιν γὰρ ἔφηγε ὁδὸς Γαίηνδε δόμονδε.
 Τόνδε δεδημένον ἄνδρα βάλλον σπέσσειν γλαφυροῖσι
 αὐτῷ σὺν μήλῳ καὶ ἤρξαμεν εὐωχέσθαι
 λαβροποτάζοντες μάλα νήπιοι ἧῦτε παῖδες (145)
 ἀλλὰ μεθημοσύνη ἡμῖν πολυπικρὰ τέτυκτο.
 Εἰς τέλος οἰνοβαρεῖς κατ' ἄρ' εὖδομεν⁴⁸⁹ εἰν σπῆεσσιν
 κώματι καμνόμενοι ῥεγχόμενοι ἧῦτε σῦες.

⁴⁸⁷ cf. LSJ s.v. θύλακος II.1, “in pl., slang term for the *loose trousers* of Persians”.

⁴⁸⁸ This example of bestiality is likely recalling the episode from the *Odyssey* when Odysseus escapes Polyphemus’ cave by holding onto the belly of the largest ram in the flock (9.431-435); this could also evoke animal/god relations in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, such as the myth of Io (remember, humans like Oudeis and Mandys are repeatedly compared to gods because of their *advanced technology*); cf. also Theocritus *Idyll* 1.87-88 when a goatherd wishes he were a billy-goat mounting the ewes.

⁴⁸⁹ = καθεύδω (κατά + εὔδω).

Our minds rejoiced when we saw him. But he went to go to the sheep, and snatched a single woolly-headed one, and put her hind feet into his boots, and then Mandys dropped his own trousers down to his boots, and began to fornicate with the sheep, a wonder to behold. For he didn't steal the sheep for the sake of destroying the universe, but he stole it to fulfil his lusty desires. Then with haste we caught him and the sheep. And unquenchable laughter rose up amongst all my companions, because of this sheep and Mandys since he loved it; this was the end of the danger and our hard work, since we possessed Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. And so our mission had come to an end, and there seemed to be a way back for us to our home, Earth. We threw this man, tied up, in a hollow cave, along with the sheep itself, and we began to celebrate by drinking very greedily, like foolish children, and our drunkenness made us very bitter. In the end, drunk on wine, we laid down in the caves to rest in deep slumber, worn out and snoring like pigs.

Αὐτίκα πυραύλου κónαβός περ ἐγείρετο θυμὸν
 ἔξω δ' ἐσσύμενοι ἴδομεν σκάφος ἀνέρος αὐτοῦ (150)
 πτάσθαι ἄνω κόσμονδε· φύγεν δὲ με ἢ καὶ ἐταίρους.
 Οὐ γὰρ πλεῖν οἷς ἔσκεν ἐνὶ σπέεσιν γλαφυροῖσι
 κοσμοθεωρούσῃ· Φανερώς ἔλε Μανδύς καὶ μιν.
 Ἥμεῖς μὲν χαίτας τίλομεν⁴⁹⁰ κροῦμεν δὲ τε κρᾶτα
 δύστηνοί τε δ' ἀνέλπιστοί τε μέθη λίπε θυμόν. (155)
 Αὐτίκ' ἐπεσσύμενοι εἰσῆλθομεν οὐρανοπλοῖον
 ἡμέτερον καὶ πύραυλος μ' ἔλασεν ποτὶ χάσμα
 πολλὰ δ' ἀρηομένοι⁴⁹¹ νῦν ἥρξαμεν ἄγρᾳ διῶκειν
 Μανδὺν ἀνήνορα φῶρα διὰς ζακενοῖο βάραθρα
 αὐτὸν ἀεικέλιον καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν (160)
 αἰεὶ θαυμάζοντες ὅπως ὃ δύναιτ' ὑπαλῦσαι.
 Ἀλλὰ μὲν οὐ περ ἔην μυστήριον ὥς τό γ' ἔφαινε.
 Οἶδε προβοσκοφόροι θῆρες Μανδὺν γὰρ ἔλυσαν
 ἱππεύειν ἐθέλοντες ἕως ἧθος μὲν ἔχουσιν
 οἴχεισθαι τοὺς μακρόποδας καὶ τοῖσι φόρευσθαι. (165)
 Ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἦσαν τοῖσιν κόραμοι καὶ ἄνακτες
 ἀλλὰ γε δυσγενέες τέτυκον καὶ ἀμήχανοι αὐτοί.
 Τοὺς μὲν μακροπόδες φόρεον ἰδὲ καὶ θεράπευον
 καὶ σφε *ἐπισκοπέοντας* ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέοντο
 μὰ ψ ἄνευ αἰτίης δμητοί γ' ἐν θυμῷ ἐόντες. (170)
 Τοὶ μὲν λύσαντές γε θέλον Μανδὺν ἐπιβῆναι
 ἀλλὰ δ' τοῦς ἀπόσευσέ τε καὶ φύγε καὶ λάβε μῆλον.
 Ὡς κύκλωμα τύχης στρέφεται μὲν ἄνω τε κάτω τε.

⁴⁹⁰ = τίλλω.

⁴⁹¹ = ἀράομαι.

The din of the rocket immediately aroused our minds, and rushing outside we saw that the very man's ship was flying up into space. He escaped me and my companions. And the sheep who watches the universe was no longer in the hollow caves, so Mandys had clearly taken her as well. We plucked out our hair and hit our heads, wretched and hopeless, and our minds sobered up. We immediately entered our spaceship in haste, and the rocket propelled us into the abyss, and with many curses we began to chase our prey, the unmanly thief Mandys, through the pits of empty space; chasing this ugly man and the sheep who watches the universe, always wondering how he could have escaped us. But it was certainly no secret, as it seemed. For the proboscis-bearing animals untied Mandys, wanting to ride him as they are accustomed to go about on the kangaroos and be carried by them. Originally, they were their lords and masters, but became degenerates and helpless themselves. The kangaroos carried and served them, and called themselves the 'inspectors' in vain for no reason, since they were tame in mind. Once they'd untied him, they wanted to get on Mandys, but he shook them off and fled, and took the sheep. This is how the wheel of fate turns, up and down.

Ἐννῆμαρ Μανδὺν δ' διώκομεν ἀστρονέοντες
 οὐδὲ κιχανέμεναι ταχὺ πλοῖον εἶο δύναντες. (175)
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ δέκατόν γε φάνη χθόνιον νέον ἥμαρ
 νηὺς ἡμετέρη γέγονεν ἀνδρῶν ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 γνώτων τεχνάων οἶδ' αὐτοὶ ἀστροπορεῦται.
 Οἱ μὲν ξείνην νῆα θοὴν χώρῃ σκοπέοντες
 ἡμᾶς πλανήτη αὐτῶν ἐρύσαι ἐπίτελλον (180)
 ῥαδιοφωνοῦντες (*Φράντης μετέθηκε ἅπαντα*)
 αἰχμηλωτεύοντες.⁴⁹² ἀτὰρ Μανδὺς φύγεν αὐτίς.
 Ἡμεῖς μὲν χαίτας τίλομεν κροῦμεν δέτε κρᾶτα
 ἐσσύμενοι ζαπέδῳ ἔχομεν καλεργέα νῆα
 αἰχμηλωτοευόμενοι κρατερῇ περ ἀνάγκῃ. (185)
 Ὡς κύκλωμα τύχης στρέφεται μὲν ἄνω τε κάτω τε.

⁴⁹² = αἰχμαλωτεύω.

For nine days we chased Mandys by sailing amongst the stars, but we couldn't catch up with his swift vessel. But when it just turned the tenth Earth-day, our ship came to a land of men familiar with technologies who could traverse amongst the stars themselves. When they saw our swift alien ship in their tract, they ordered us on the radiophone to moor ourselves onto their planet (Franta translated everything), and took us prisoner, so Mandys had escaped once again. We plucked our hair and hit our heads, and once we'd moored our beautifully constructed ship on the ground, we were taken prisoner by powerful force. This is how the wheel of fate turns, up and down.

Book Λ

[Τὰ περὶ τῶν ἀγάμων ἀνδρῶν καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν]

Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα θοὴν μὲν ἐρύσαμεν ἀστερονῆα
 ἦλθον αὐτότοποι ἄνδρες φεῖσροις ἀραρόντες
 καὶ λάβον ἄστροπορευτῆρας πάντας κρατέοντες
 ἐξείης ἐτάρους μὲν ἐμοὺς ἰδὲ πλοίαρχόν με
 χειροπέδας λυγρὰς θέντες χερσὶν στιβαρῆσιν (5)
 καὶ ἦγον ποτὶ ἄστυ ἐὼν κόραμον δέ τιν' ἀνδρῶν
 ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων ἔπετ' αὐτοματός⁴⁹³ με.

Τὸν δ' ἔθελον φῶτες βαλέειν φείσροιο βίηφι
 ἀλλὰ μὲν ὅξυ βόων προσέφη σφ' ἰδίῃ ἐνὶ γλώσση
 ἀνδρας φεισροφόρους· (10)

τοὺς μὲν σέβας εἶλεν ἅπαντας
 καὶ ἔασαν ἡμῶν κοράμοιο δόμονδε ἔπεσθαι.
 Ἦσαν δ' ἔμπειροι ἄνδρες τέχνησι σοφοὶ τε
 ἀλλὰ δέον γλώσσω γνῶμης ἄλλων δέ τε πάντων
 οἷα μὲν «οὐμανιτᾶτας» ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσι
 φωνῇ ῥωμαῖων φῶτες χθονιοὶ τε νέοι τε. (15)

⁴⁹³ cf. *Iliad* 2.408, 5.749, 8.393, 18.376, Hesiod *Works and Days* 103, 118.

Book 11

[The events concerning the unmarried men and the rest]

But when we launched the swift starship, the local men came fitted with phasers and these powerful men captured every astronaut one by one, including my companions, and me, the ship's captain. After they'd put sorrowful handcuffs on our strong hands, they also led us to their city and some leader of men, but my translator Franta followed me of his own will. The men wanted to shoot him with the power of their phasers, but with a loud shout he addressed the phaser-bearing men in their own personal language. Religious awe seized them all, and they let him follow us into their ruler's palace. They were experienced men, and wise in technology, but lacked intelligent language and all the other things that recent Earthly men call 'humanitas' in the Latin language.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹⁴ cf. LewisShort s.v. *humanitas* II.B, "Mental cultivation befitting a man, liberal education, good breeding, elegance of manners or language, refinement, [...] good manners, [...] polished language".

Οὕτως Φράντα μεταφρήζων σφισὶ θαῦμα τέτυκτο.
 Ἦλθομεν εἰν δεσμοῖς πρὸς τὸν κρατερὸν βασιλῆα
 ἄνδρα μέγαν τε καὶ ἐσθλὸν ἐ καὶ ἄλις ἡβάοντα.
 Τόνδε καθιζόμενον τύχομεν θρόνῳ ἀγλαοτύκτῳ
 εὖρωστόν τ' ἰδὲ καὶ μαλερὸν ὥς αἰὲν ἔοικεν (20)
 κοίραμον ἄνδρ' ἔμεναι βασιλῆά τε ποιμένα λαῶν.⁴⁹⁵
 Ὅς μὲν ἴδων ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῖς φυλάκεσσιν ἀκούσας
 γλώσση αὐτογόνων ἄμμε προσέφη ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν
[αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα]
 «Ὡ ξεῖνοί τινές ἐστε; πόθεν γλαφυρὸν πλέτε κόσμον;
 ἦ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἦ μασιδίῳς ἀλάλησθε
 οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ἐπ' ἀστέρας ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες;»
 Ὡς φάτο· τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ περ ἀμειβόμενος προέειπον
 ἡμετέρῃ γλώσσῃ· τὰ μεταφρήζων μετέθηκεν. (30)
 «Οὐ γάρ τοι ὦνάξ τε κακὰ φρονέοντες ἔβημεν
 τειδὸν πλαήτην· ληιστῆρες οὗτι τοί εἰμεν
 ἀλλὰ φυλακτῆρες πόλεος τελλοῦ ἀπονόσφιν
 πλάνην ναιόμενοι τὸν Γαίην κικλήσκουσιν
 ἀλλοδαπὸν ξεῖνον· τηλοῦθεν κοσμοοδεύων (35)
 εἰλήλουθα πόλιν πλάνην καὶ ἀγλαόρων
 σῆς ἄρχης· σὺν νηϊ τ' ἐμῇ καὶ ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν
 ἄνερα ζητοῦντες χαλεπὸν φυζάνορα φῶρα.

⁴⁹⁵ cf. *Iliad* 1.263, 2.85, 4.296, 5.144, 6.214 etc., *Odyssey* 3.156, 4.24, 14.497, 15.151, 17.109 etc., Hesiod *Theogony* 1000.

And so my translator Franta was a marvel to them. We approached the powerful king in chains, he was a large, handsome man, and still in the prime of his youth. When he saw us and had heard about us from the guards, this lord of men addressed us in his own language [but our translator Franta translated everything]:

“O aliens, who are you? Where in the hollow cosmos have you sailed from? Are you wandering in pursuit of some goal or just in vain? Are you wandering through the stars here and there in pursuit of some goal or just recklessly like pirates, staking your souls by bringing misfortune to strangers?”

So he spoke, and I responded to him in my own language, which my translator translated:

“O lord, we have not come to your planet with ill intent, nor are we pirates, but rather the guardians of a city far, far away, we live on a planet called Gaia, alien and strange. we have come on a journey from far away to your city and glistening star of your empire, with my ship and trusty companions, seeking a dangerous man, a thief in flight.

- Ἄρχοντες πέμψαν καί μοι κρατερῶς ἐπίτελλον
 μήποτε νοστήσαι πρὶν κλέπην φῶτα λάβεσθαι (40)
 οὐδὲ τε τοῦ κλέψης τ' ἄρπαγμα τ' ἀνάξιον ἦεν
 ἀλλὰ πολ' ἔντιμόν τ' ἀναριθμητὴν σχέτο τιμήν.
 Ἄλλοις ζῴοισιν τοι ἐνὶ κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν
 οὐ κεν ἐγὼ δυνάσαιμι λογίζεин – μωροὶ ἔασιν –
 ἀλλὰ τυνὴ ὄναξ καὶ τειὰ ἄνδρες ἀγαυοὶ (45)
 πάντες γνωριμαί ἐστε καὶ ὕμμι θυμὸς ἄριστος.
 Τοιγὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω· κίνδυνον ἢ ἐ πόνον τε
 ὥς κινδυνεύσας ἡμᾶς ὑμᾶς δέ τε πάντα
 οἶά περ εἰν κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν πρῆγματ' ἔνεστι.
 Γνωῖθι ἄναξ Μανδὺν κλέπτῃν ἀνήνορα φῶρα (50)
 κεκλοφέναι πρόβατον τὸ γὰρ οὐ ποτ' ἀνάξιόν ἐστι
 ἀλλὰ πολ' ἔντιμον τ' ἀναριθμητὴν σχέτο τιμήν.
 Ἐξισώσεας⁴⁹⁶ φασὶ σοφοὶ ψυσικοῖσιν ἐνεῖναι⁴⁹⁷
 τρηχέας κβαντιακῆς γε θεωρίας ἀπόδειξιν.
 Αὐτὰρ γράμματα λυγρά γ' ἐξισώσων χαλεπαίνων (55)
 δείκνυται ὥς τόδε δεῖ εἶναι οὐ κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Εἰ μὲν οὐκ εἴη γε φύσις τις κοσμοορῶσα
 κόσμος εὐρύπορος οὐ κεν δυνάσαιτο ὑπάρχειν
 οὐ χρόνος οὐ ζακενὸν οὐκ ὕλη οὔτε τι ἄλλο
 ἀλλὰ τε μὲν σκοπιὴν αἰεὶ δεῖ ἔχειν παρατηροῦν. (60)*

⁴⁹⁶ = ἐξισώω.

⁴⁹⁷ cf. *Astr.* 1.25-36.

Our rulers sent us on our way and gave me strict commands never to return home until the thief is caught. And it wasn't a robbery of something that was simple and worthless, but very valuable and has an incalculable price. I couldn't tell the other creatures in the depths of the cosmos about this – since they're idiots – but you, my lord, as well as your noble men, are all remarkable and have the best minds. Well then, I'll tell you about the hazard and toil that endangers us, as well as all of you, and the things that exist in the depths of the cosmos. Be aware, my lord, that Mandys, the treacherous and unmanly thief, has stolen a sheep that is not at all worthless, but rather is very valuable and has an incalculable price. They say that the equations in physics are harsh, and that their proof is quantum theory. furthermore, they say that the fatal words of those difficult equations demonstrate that there must be a being who watches the universe. For if there weren't a creature who keeps the universe in sight, then the broadwayed universe would not have been able to come into existence, nor would have time, nor the vacuum of space, nor matter or anything else at all. But something must always be keeping watch, making careful observations

- Τίς μὲν ἀνθρώπων τὸ λάβειν θνητῶν δυνάσαιο;
 οἶδε σοφοὶ ἐσόφριζαν ἀεὶ περὶ κοσμοορώσεις
 τίς γε φύσις εἶη καὶ ζῶονκοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἄν τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο τοῖς φρονέουσιν.
 Εἰς τέλος καὶ ἔτυχον γινῶσαι ὡς μῆλόν ἐστι (65)
 ζῶον εἰν Γαίῃ· τὸ σπουδαίως ἐφύλασσον
 ἀλλὰ ἐ Μανδῦς ἀνὴρ κλέψεν τε φόρει διὰ κόσμον
 πᾶν κινδυνεύων καὶ κύριος ὢν ἐπὶ πάντας.
 Εἰ μὲν κεν κτείνεις ὅϊν Μανδῦς πολύμητις
 οὐ τι δὲ πλεῖν εἶη ὄντων πάντων φυσέων τε (70)
 οὐ χρόνος οὐ ζακενὸν καὶ ἐνεργεῖη τε καὶ ὕλη.
 Ναὶ γὰρ Μανδύς τ' αὐτὸς ὄλοιτό γε ὥστε καὶ ἄλλα
 ἀλλὰ γε καὶ μανικὸς ὅδ' ἀνὴρ καὶ ἀκηδοσύνης τε.
 Ῥηϊδίως Μανδύς γε δύναιτο καὶ αὐτοφόνευσθαι⁴⁹⁸
 αὐτῷ σὺν κόσμῳ· τόδε οἷ τίσις εἶη ἀπάντων. (75)
 Ἡμᾶς μὲν πέμψαν κόραμοι ἄνδρες ἐνὶ Γαίῃ
 Μανδὺν ἀρπάζαι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἀλλὰ τὰ λάθρα τέτυκτο· φόβος ἦν δημονοεῖς.
 Ἡμεῖς μὲν Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 ἐπλέομεν δ' αὐτοὶ γλαφυροῦ κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν (80)
 καὶ γὰρ χρήματα πολλὰ γ' ἐλεύσομεν ἀστρονέοντες
 θαύματα· οὐ κεν ἐγὼ τὰ περ ἐξέρεειν δυνάσαιοιμι.*

⁴⁹⁸ = αὐτός + φονάω.

Who among mortal men could possibly grasp this? These scientists have often speculated about the observer of the cosmos, and what sort of living creature it could be that watches the universe, but no conclusion was reached by those who've pondered this question. In the end, they managed to understand that there was a sheep that lived on earth, who was kept under careful guard, but Mandys stole it and carried it through the cosmos, putting everyone in danger, and was the guardian of all things. If the cunning Mandys should kill the sheep, then there would be no more beings and substances, nor would there be time, or the vacuum of space and energy, or even matter. Yes, for Mandys himself would perish, just like the rest of us, but this man is a maniac and careless. Mandys could also easily kill himself along with the universe itself, since this would be his revenge against all things. The rulers on Earth sent us to catch Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe, but it happened in secret, because there was a fear that people would find out about it. We've been seeking Mandys here and there, and we sailed by ourselves through the depths of the hollow cosmos, and as we sailed amongst the stars we saw many things that were so wonderful that I can't even begin to describe them.

*Εἰς τέλος καὶ Μανδὺν καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 εἵλομεν εἰν πλάνη τινὶ τῷ γ' ἦν σὺν οἵεσσι
 ἀλλὰ πάλιν γε τύχεν Μανδύς ἡμᾶς ὑπαλῶξαι (85)
 μῆλον αὐτὸ λάβων ἔφυγεν δέ με κοσμοπορεύων.
 Ἥμεῖς ἄγρᾳ διωκόμενοί τε κιχανόμενοί τε
 αὐτε λάβειν θέλομεν γήθησε δὲ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ
 ἀλλὰ τεοὶ ἄνδρες ἐπίτελλον νῆα ἐρύσσαι
 καὶ ἰδὲ δεσμώτας ἦγον πρὸς ἄστν τε καὶ σε (90)
 κινδυνεύοντες ὑμᾶς καὶ πάντα τε κόσμον.
 Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ εἵποιμι περὶ μήλου τε καὶ ἀνδρὸς
 εἰ μὴ αἰχμηλωτοτευωμένοισιν⁴⁹⁹ ἀνάγκη.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην μὲν ἐγὼ μετεθήκε δὲ Φράντα ἅπαντα
 καὶ κόραμος καὶ ἄλλοι ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ. (95)
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἔπειτα ἄναξ δεσμοὺς ἀπολῦσαι ἄνωγεν
 πάντων χεῖρηφιν καὶ ἐζόμεναι ἐπὶ ἔδρας
 καὶ ἡμῖν δμῶδες δῶκαν εἰς χεῖρα ἐκάστω
 ἢ δέπας ἢ κύαθον περικαλλὲς ἢ ἐκύπελλον
 τοῦτοισι μὲν χεῦδον ἡμῖν καὶ οἶνον ἐρυθρόν. (100)
 Οὕτως ἐξ ἐχθρῶν εἰς ξεινοφίλους μετέθηκαν
 ἄνδρες αὐτόγονοι σὺν αὐτῷ ποιμένι λαῶν.*

⁴⁹⁹ = αἰχμαλωτεύω.

In the end, we caught both Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe on a certain planet which was furnished with sheep, but Mandys managed to flee from us again, taking the very sheep and escaped us by journeying into the cosmos. We, chasing and catching up with our prey, wanted to catch him again, and our courageous hearts were cheerful, but you gentlemen gave the order for us to land our ship, and led us in chains to your city and you, putting yourselves and the entire cosmos in danger. For I would not have told you about the sheep and the man if we hadn't been compelled to by being taken prisoner."

So I spoke, while Franta translated everything, and the ruler as well as the others quietly became silent. But then the lord ordered that the chains be loosened from all our hands, and that we sit on the benches, and to each one of us servants put goblets, and very beautiful cups, and beakers in our hands, then they poured red wine in them for us too. And so the locals changed from hostile to friendly, along with the shepherd of the people himself.

- Σὺν δ' ἡμῖν γε ποτάζεσκόν τ' ἐρέεινον ἅπαντα
 χρήματα καὶ τύχας ἡμῶν κόσμου τε ὁδοῖο
 κοσμοθεωροῦντος περὶ μήλου ἀλλὰ μάλιστα. (105)
 Τοῖσι δ' ἀμειβόμενοι καταλέξαμεν οἳ ἐθέλοντο
 αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα
 καὶ πύματος κόραμός γε λέγεν πτεροέσσιν ἔπεσιν·
 «Θαύματα νῦν μοι ξεῖνε λέγεις θεῖον περὶ μήλου
 κοσμοθεωροῦντος καὶ Μανδύος ἀστροφυγῆδος. (110)
 Γινώσκω φρονέω ὅτι κίνδυνός τοι ἅπαντων
 κόσμου εὐρυπόρου πάνων ἀστρῶν φυσέων τε
 ἢ χρόνου ἢ ζακενοῦ καὶ ἐνεργείης τε καὶ ὕλης
 ἀνάγκη κρατερὴ λάβεμέν μιν ὅτι τάχιστα.
 Τοὶ μὲν ἐγὼ καὶ ἀλεξήσω σὺν ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν (115)
 Μανδὺν ἀρπάξαι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 καὶ τάχα σὺν αὐτοῖς δόμεναι Γαίηνδε δόμονδε.
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼν ἐθέλοιμι φύλαξ μήλου τετύκεσθαι
 οὐδὲ τις ἡμετέρων· ἔστιν μεγάλη μάλα τάξις
 ἀλλὰ δέ τοι δώσω ἐπικουρίην καὶ ἄλεξιν (120)
 παντοδαπῷ λαῷ καὶ πλοῖοις κοσμοπόροισιν
 Μανδὺν μηλοφόρον μῆλον καὶ αὐτὸ λάβεσθαι.»
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς πάντες κροτέοντο ἄνακτι
 τῷδ' ἦδη⁵⁰⁰ γε χάριν καὶ ἐγὼ πτεροέσσιν ἔπεστιν.

⁵⁰⁰ Οἶδα + χάριν + τινα = 'thank X'.

They drank with us and asked us about all kinds of things, as well as about our encounters, and our journey through the cosmos, but most of all about the sheep who watches the universe. In reply, I told them about what they wanted, then our translator Franta translated everything, and the king at last addressed us in winged words:

“Alien, you are now telling me wonderful things about a divine sheep who watches the universe, and Mandys the space-fugitive. I understand and know full well that everyone is in danger, namely the broad-wayed universe, all stars, and beings, as well as time, and the vacuum of space, and energy, and even matter, so there is a strong necessity to catch him as quickly as possible. I, along with my companions, shall lend you aid in catching Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. As well as in bringing you with them quickly back to your home, Earth. I wouldn’t wish to become the guardian of the sheep, nor would any of ours, since it is a very great role, but I shall give you aid and help, with all kinds of people and vessels capable of traversing the cosmos, in order that Mandys the sheep-bearer and the sheep itself be caught.”

So the king spoke, and everyone applauded their ruler, and I thanked him in winged words.

- Τήνδε συνηκοσύνην⁵⁰¹ (125)
καὶ ἐδαίσομεν εἰν μεγάροισιν
αὐτόγονοι καὶ ἀστροπόροι μέθυ λαβροποτοῦντες.
Ἄλλ' ὥς μεθισθεῖς καὶ οἶνοβαρεῖς ἐγένοντο
πάντες αὐτόγονοι καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
— οὐ γὰρ πουλυπότης μὲν ἐγὼ πλεῖν μετροπότης δέ —
ἦρξαν αὐτόγονοι ἄνδρες δμῶεσσι κελεύειν (130)
ἦνεγκαί τι τὸ οὐ Φράντης ἔτυχεν μεταθέσθαι.
Ἦνεγκαν δμῶες ξένα πρήγματα ἦύτε βύρσας
καὶ κατὰ δαιτιμόνας μηρίσαν⁵⁰² μῶνον ἐκάστω
καὶ μοι ἐν δῶκαν αὐτῷ — θαυμάζετο θυμός.
Ἄλλ' οἱ αὐτόγονοι ἦρξαν βύρσας ἀναφυσᾶν (135)
οἷς στόμασιν ἦρξαν φαίνεσθαι γυῖα γυναικῶν
μαζοὶ καὶ πυγαὶ καὶ ὄργανα κρυπτὰ ἐρώτων
καὶ τε πέφην' ἔμεναι κούρων τιν' ἀγάλματα γυμνῶν⁵⁰³
ὔλη τεχνομένη τινὶ εὖ πυκινῶς ἀραρόντα
τῆσιν φουσαμένησιν ἀποκλεισθεῖσι καὶ αὐλοῖς (140)
ἦρξαν ἀντόγονοι πορνεύεσθαι ἐπὶ κούρων
πυκνὰ τετεχνηθειςσίων μέγα θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι.
Τούτων πορνοποιῶν ἱερὴ ἱς ἦρξαν' ἄνακτος.
Οὐδ' ἄρα αἱ κοῦραι τεχνημοσύνης ἀραρυῖαι
κείατ' ἀκίνηται ὥς νεκρὸν ἄγαλμ' ἐπέοικεν (145)
ἀλλὰ γε σύμπρηξαν πᾶσιν πορνευομένοισιν
ὥς ζωαί· τέχνων ἦν θαύματα ἢ σοφίης.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ = σύνεσις (?)

⁵⁰² = μερίζω.

⁵⁰³ My essay on cyborg courtesans and ecphrasis is highly relevant to this passage (see my essay *Hetair-A.I.: Cyborg Courtesans and the Desire for the 'Ideal'*), cf. my note on *Astr.* 9.112, open to Old vs. New reading; note that these sex-dolls are *agalmata*, 'pleasing gifts', not just regular statues.

⁵⁰⁴ cf. Julie Wosk's (2015:32-39, 46) interviews with Matt McMullen, CEO of Abyss Creations.

We toasted this understanding in the great hall, the locals and the astronauts drinking wine heavily. But when all the locals and my trusty companions had become drunk and heavy with wine – for I am not a hard drinker, but rather I drink in moderation – the local men began to give the servants orders to bring them something that Franta couldn't translate. The servants brought in strange hide-like objects, and divided them one-each amongst the diners, and they gave me one of them – and my mind was amazed. Then the locals began inflating the hides with their mouths, and they began to resemble women's limbs, breasts, and buttocks, as well as the hidden organs of love, and it became apparent that they were statues of naked women, cunningly constructed very well with some sort of technological material. Then once they'd been puffed up and the tubes had been tied off, the locals began to fornicate with the girls, they were compactly put together, a great wonder to behold. The sacred power of the king ruled these man-made prostitutes. But these girls, constructed by technological knowledge, didn't lie down motionless as befits an inanimate statue, but cooperated with all the fornicators, as if they were alive. This was a marvel of technology and science.

Ταῦτά γε σκεψάμενοι καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
ἦρξαν φυσᾶσθαι κούρων τὰ ἀγάλματα καὶ οἱ
καὶ τετεχνημένῃσι γυναιξὶν γυῖα μιγῆναι. (150)

Οὐ γὰρ ἐμεῖο πέρι μὲν ἐγὼ εἵποιμί τε μᾶλλον
ὥς πλεῖον τέτυκεν μεγάρῳ – μάλα αἰδέομαι γάρ.
Εἰς τέλος αὐτόγονοι φῶτες καὶ πάντες ἐταῖροι
τῶν ἔργων ἔκαμον καὶ ὕπνος κρᾶτα κάλυπεν
οὕτως καμνόμενοι διὰ νύκτ' εἰς ἥοα διᾶν (155)
εὖδομεν εἰν μεγάροισιν ἄναξ λαός τε καὶ ἡμεῖς.

Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠώς
[ξεινιακῇ τῇ ἡμετέρῃ ἐτερότροπος ἦεν]
τῆμός γ' ἐξ ὕπνοιο ἐγὼν ἤγειρ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
ἄρχυντος ἀνδρῶν – ἄλλοι εἰν κώματι ἦσαν (160)
καὶ εἶδον βασιλῆα ἐγρηγορέναι ἐνὶ θήκῃ⁵⁰⁵
καὶ μιν εἰρωτᾶν δέ μ' ἄνωγεν θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ.

Αὐτίκα τὸν Φράντην ἐκ κώματος ἦρα φάος⁵⁰⁶ δέ
καὶ αὐτὸν κόραμον ἔπεσιν προσέφηεν πετερόεσσιν
ἀλλὰ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα· (165)

«Θαυμαστὸν βασιλεῦ ξεῖνόν τ' ἐόρακά περ ἔργον
χθιζὸς σῶ μεγάρῳ ὥς πορνεύοντο γυναῖκας
τεχνομένας φῶτες ῥοβότας μέγα θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι
οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ γὰρ σῇ χώρῃ ἴδου ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
θῆλυν αὐτόγονον ἢ κούρην ἢ γυναιῖκα (170)

τῶν μὲν γὰρ εἴη πολὺ φέρτερον ἔργον ἐρώτων.
Ἀλλὰ δέ μοι βασιλεῦ πρόφρων μυστήριον εἶπε
κουράων γε πεπλαστομένων φυσικῶν τ' ἀπορίην.»

⁵⁰⁵ = θρόνος.

⁵⁰⁶ It's unclear how φάος δέ fits into the sentence.

Once my trusty companions had seen these things, they began to inflate the statues of the girls and then mingled limbs with the artificially constructed women. I wouldn't want to say more about myself than what happened in the hall – for I am very ashamed. In the end, the locals and all my companions became tired of these deeds and sleep concealed their heads. And so, worn out, we slept in the hall throughout the night up to the bright dawn, the ruler, the people, and us. When Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [strange since it was a different type to our own], then I woke up from my sleep in the ruler's house – the others were in a deep slumber, and I saw that the king was awake on his throne, and my courageous heart bid me to ask him questions. I immediately lifted Franta from his deep sleep, and I addressed the king himself in winged words, while my translator Franta translated everything:

“Alien king, I have seen an extraordinary thing yesterday in your great hall, men fornicated with women who were artificially constructed robots, it was a great wonder to behold, nor have I seen with my own eyes a female native or girl or woman in your country. For these erotic deeds would be much better with them. But now, king, tell me willingly about the mystery of the fabricated girls and the lack of naturally born women.”

Ὡς ἐράμην ὅδε μ' αὖτις ἀμείβετο κοίραμος ἀνδρῶν
[αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα] (175)

«Τοὶ γὰρ νῦν ὧ̃ ξεῖνε ἐγὼ κατὰ μοῖραν ἐνίσπω·
Τῶνδε παρελθόντων τε παλαιότερων ἐνιαυτῶν
ἦσαν ἡμετέρῃ χώρῃ ὥς καὶ ἐπέοικεν
ἄνδρες καὶ θήλη ἠὼς κοινὸν νόμιμόν τε
οὐσίης γονοχωρίστης πάσης ἐνὶ κόσμῳ. (180)

Ἀλλὰ μέγα πλοῖόν γε πάλοι ποτὲ ἦλθε χαμᾶζε
οὐρανόθεν – ἐν τῷ χαλεπαὶ φορέοντο γυναῖκες
λεσβιακαὶ ἰδὲ ἀνδροφόνοι καὶ ἀγριόθυμοι.
Παντοίως ἦσαν κοινὰ νόμιμαί τε γυναῖκες
ἀλλὰ γε τῆς ἦσαν κέρκοι καὶ οὗατα μακρὰ (185)

θηκτὰ ἕως θηρέσσι τε λοιπ' ἦσαν εὖτυκται
τῆσιν τοι ἦσαν τεχνήματα φέρτερα τούτων
οἷα μὲν ἡμετέρῃ χώρῃ τοῖς ἡμασι ἦσαν
ἐγκαταέστησαν⁵⁰⁷ δὲ τυραννίδα λεσβιακάων.
Πλείστους τοὺς φῶτας κτεῖναν τὰ νηλεῖ φείσῳ (190)

καὶ παύρους ἔασαν δουλεύειν οἷα κάκιστα
καὶ ὥς δωτῆρας τοῦ σπέρματος· [οὐδὲ τ' ἄρ' ἦσαν
τέχνην τῇ ὥδν καρπίζεται ἐκ καρύοιο
ὥοῦ τοῦ ἐτέρου· τάδε λάθετο ἀνδρογυναῖκας].

⁵⁰⁷ = ἐγκαθίστημι.

So I spoke, and this lord of men made his reply [but my translator Franta translated his words]:

“I will now tell you about it in order, alien: in bygone and very ancient years, there were in our land (as is also fitting) men and women, as is common and normal for all gonochoristic beings in the cosmos. But long ago, a mighty vessel came to this planet from the heavens –which hateful women were carried in, they were lesbians, man-slaying and wild-spirited. They were in many ways normal, average women, but they had long tails and ears, sharp like those that belong to beasts, and other things were well-shaped too, they had technologies that were more advanced than what we had at the time on this planet, so they installed the despotic rule of lesbians. They killed the majority of the men with the pitiless phaser, and they allowed a few to become slaves in the worst possible jobs and as donors of sperm [since there was no technology by which an egg could be fertilised with the nucleus of another person’s egg, but this was not known by the manly women].

- Τὰς νομίμας θήλυσ αὐτῶν ἐποίησαν ἀκοιτεῖς. (195)*
Οὕτως μὲν χώρην ἐτυράννευσαν μάλα δηθά.
Ἀλλ' ἦμος δ' ἄνδρες δεδάακαν⁵⁰⁸ τεχνικὰ ἔργα
(λάθρ' οὐκ εἰάαται δοῦλοι τέχνας μεμαθῆναι)
τῆμος λεσβιακῶν ὄπλισαν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον
καὶ μεταναστάσεως νίκην ὥς καὶ νενίκηκαν. (200)
Πάσας κερκοφόρους θήλυσ κτάνον ἐχθροφορεύτας
ἀλλὰ γε τὰς νομίμας δούλωσαν ὥς ἔσαν αὐτοί.
Μακρὸς γάρ σφε φόβος ἔλε πάσων θηλυτυράννων.
Καί γε Βάδην τε βάδην τέτυκον ὥς θῆρες ἄναυδοι
τέχνης ἡμετέρησι γενετικῇσι νόῳ τε. (205)
Τὰς μὲν ὑπειρόγκους περ ἐτεύζαμεν εἵνεκα φόρτου
καὶ πυγῶν ἔνεκεν ταὶ χάρμωτα φωτὶ τέτυκται.
Αἱ μὲν φορτόφερόν τε κάμοντό τε ἥϋτε θῆρες
ἠὲ τὰ τέκνα τέκοντο τὰ ἄρσενα καὶ ἰδὲ θήλη. (210)
Τούτων ἄρσενα τέκνα τέκον ὥς ἄνερας ἄλλους
ἀλλὰ τε θηλείας παῖδας ὥς θῆρας ἀναύδους.
Οὕτως ζῶομεν γ' ἀπάνευθε φόβοιο γυναικῶν
ὥς ἄρα ἄναυδοι ἰδὲ καὶ δμηταὶ τετύκοντο.

⁵⁰⁸ = δάω.

The women made their own partners out of normal girls. And so, they were the despotic leaders of our land for a very long time. But when the men had gained technological knowledge (in secret, since they weren't allowed to learn technologies as slaves), then they prepared utter destruction for the lesbians, and victory over the wanderers, and so they prevailed.⁵⁰⁹ They killed all the tail-bearing women who bore them hostility, but enslaved the normal women, just as they themselves had been. For great fear seized them for all the female tyrants. And then gradually, step-by-step, they became unable to speak like beasts through our genetic technology and knowledge. We constructed these giants for the sake of carrying burdens, and for the sake of their buttocks, which are delights fashioned for men. They carried our burdens and worked like beasts, producing both male and female children. Of these, the male children were like other male children, but the female children were like the silent beasts. And so we lived free from the fear of women, since they were unable to speak and were domesticated.

⁵⁰⁹ This last line is a little obscure.

Ἀλλά γέ τις ἦλθεν νοῦσος ἀνὰ θηρογυναῖκας
 ἄγνωτος τ' ἡμῖν οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεσθα σαῶσαι (215)
 πᾶσαι ὀλώλασι νῦν καὶ οὐ πλεῖν εἰσι γυναῖκες
 φορτοφορενέμεναι καὶ ἡμῖν τέγκα τέκεσθαι.

Οὐ γὰρ ἴς ἡμῖν τεῦξαι τέχνης πυκινῇσιν·
 Σύνκορσεν⁵¹⁰ δὲ μεταλαξίς τις ὀλωοτάτη νῦν
 χρωμουσώματι «ἔξ» ὥς εἶκεν διπλόον ἦεν (220)
 οὐ ποτε μέν κεν ἔην ἱκανὸν ζῆν θῆλυ τέτυκτον.

Οὐδ' ἄρα τὴν δύναμιν γ' ἔχομεν βλαβέην ἀνααιρεῖν,
 ἀλλ' ἡμῖν ἀτόκοις ἐστὶν σάος αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.
 Φυσαμένας δὲ κόρας μάχλων ἔνεκέν γε ποίησαν.»
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς (225)

Φράντης μετεθήκε τὸ ῥῆμα,
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτὸν προσέφην περοέσσιιν ἔπεσσιιν·
 »Κλυθί γέ μεν βασιλεῦ μύθων νῦν ὄφρα τι εἴπω.
 Σὸν πρόβλημα βιοῦ ἄνα νῦν καὶ λῦσαι οἶω,
 εἴ κεν ἀκουόμενος τῷ ῥήματι καὶ ὑπακούσης.

Ἡμεῖς ἀστροπορεύοντες κόσμοιο βάθεσσιιν (230)
 [Μανδὸν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν]
 ἦλθομεν εἰς πλάνην τῷ κερκοφόροι μὲν ἔασιν
 θηλεῖαι κοῦραι καὶ οὐατα μακρὰ ἔχουσαι.

Τοῦτον πλανήτην σάφα αὐτότατόν τοι οἶω
 τῷδ' εἰσβάλλουσαι ἔξηλθον ἐκεῖδε κόραυναι. (235)

⁵¹⁰ = συνορίνω (?)

But a certain sickness shot up amongst the beast-women, which was unknown to us, so we weren't able to save them, they have all now perished and there are no more women to bear our burdens and produce children for us. For we had no power to construct them through complex technologies. Some mutation now arose that was very destructive to the 'X' chromosome, and since it seemed there were two of them, nor could a constructed woman be capable of life.⁵¹¹ Nor did we have the power to fix the damage, but we, childless, are certainly facing utter destruction. But they have made inflated girls for the sake of their lust."

So the king spoke, and Franta translated his speech, then I addressed him in winged words:

"Listen to my words, king, that I shall now tell you. I think that I can solve the problem of your livelihood, if you should listen to and obey my speech. We, after journeying amongst the stars through the depths of the cosmos [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe], arrived at a planet that had tail-bearing women, and girls that had long ears. I think that this is clearly the same planet which these invading girls left to come here.

⁵¹¹ The meaning here is also a little obscure and difficult to translate.

Καὶ ταὶ κερκοφόροι ἦσαν καὶ μακρῶταί τε
 λεσβιακαὶ ἰδὲ ἀνδρόφονοι καὶ ἀγριόθυμοι.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ πλανήτῃ τούτῳ δέσποινά μοι εἶπεν
 [τῆς δὲ τυχῆσαι ἔγωγε φιλήτωρ εὖχομαι εἶναι]
 πάντα περὶ πλάνου πολέμων καὶ ἀστοπορείων. (240)

Ἵρσε δὲ τις κούρη καὶ τὴν στάσιν ἦρξε προφῆναι
 ἄνδρας ἀνατρέψαι τε γυναῖκος ἡγεμονεῦσαι
 καὶ γε βάδην τε βάδην ἄλλων μάλα πείθετο θυμόν,
 τῆμος τῆς στάσεων ἦρξαν ἰδὲ καὶ νενίκηκαν.
 Τῇσι δὲ νικητῆς γ' ἔστην γενέα δύο χώρη (245)

αἱ μὲν λεσβιακαὶ ἐχθραὶ ἄνδρεσσι ἅπασιν
 αἱ δὲ φιλανδρίαι καὶ τοῖς κρατέειν ἐθέλουσαι.
 Ἄλλοι καὶ νόμιμοι ἦσαν ἄνδρες τε γυναῖκες
 οἳδ' ἔθελον ζῆειν ὥς πρὶν καὶ ἄνδρας ἀνάσσειν.
 Τοὺς νομίμους δ' ἔασαν λείπειν εἰν νηϊ μελαίνῃ (250)

ἀλλὰ γε ἀνδροδαμεῖται ἐπεὶ δίχα τμημέναι ἦσαν
 αἱ μὲν λεσβιακαὶ αἱ δ' ἀνδροφίλαι κρατέονται.
 Αἱ νῦν κληροῦσαν κλῆροις κοῦραι τανύπεπλοι
 καὶ τῆς λεσβιακῇσι πέσεν πλάνην ἀπολεῖψαι.
 Ταῦται νῦν φανερώς σὸν πλάνην εἰσβαλόοντο (255)
 καὶ τά γε λοιπὰ τύχησεν ἕως αὐτός μοι ἔειπες.

And there were tail-bearing, and long-eared lesbian women, who were man-slaying and wild-spirited. But on this planet, the queen told me [whose lover I happened to be and boast that I was] everything about the planet, war, and the star-journey. A certain girl rose up and began calling for a rebellion to overthrow the men and for women to be the leaders, and gradually she thoroughly convinced the minds of the other women step-by-step, and then began the revolution and also won. There were two types that won the land: the lesbian women who hated all men, and the heterosexuals who also wanted to rule them. But there was also ordinary men and women, who wanted to live as before and for men to be in charge. And they allowed the normal people to leave on a black ship, but since the conquerors of men were split in two, with the lesbian women and the heterosexuals in charge. The girls with the flowing robes now cast lots, and it fell to the lesbian women to abandon the planet. These women are now clearly the ones that invaded your planet, and the rest happened just as you yourself have told me.

Ταὶ μὲν λειφθεῖσαι πλανήτη κερκογυναῖκες
 φωτέσσιν κραατέοντο ἕως τὰς θυμὸς ἄνωγεν
 καὶ γε βάδην τε βάδην μέτα δ' ἄνδρες αὐτοὶ ἔβαλλον
 καὶ γέγονον μωροὶ τε τετάρποδες ἢ ὕτε θῆρες (260)

τοῖσι δὲ τερπόμεναι κράτεον τοῖς ψευδοκύνεσσιν
 ὥς καὶ ἐπεὶ σφε κύνας καὶ ἐπίκλησιν καλέοντο
 ἀλλὰ μὲν ἐφθίθην τεχνήματα πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλά.
 Οὐ γὰρ θηλύτεραί γε δέοντο νόοιο γυναῖκες
 ἀλλὰ ῥα δεξιότητος ὑπαὶ τῆς ἔργα πέλονται (265)

μηχανικῶν τέχων ἄλλων ἀνδρῶν ἰδὲ ἔργων
 οὕτως τῆς γνώσις τέθνηκεν ἀστροπορεύειν
 καὶ ἄλλαι τέχναι τὰς πρὶν γ' εἶχον ἐνὶ πλάνῃ.
 Τοῦτον πλανήτην μὲν ἀφικώμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες.
 οὐ γὰρ τοί γε ἅπαντα ἐνισπόμεναι ἐθέλοιμι (270)

πάντων κινδύνων καὶ οἷα τετλήκαμεν ἄνδρες
 ἀλλὰ γέ τοι ἐρέω καὶ σὺ φρεσὶ σύνθεο σῆσι.
 Οὐ πλεῖν κερκοκόρας δ' ἐθέλειν ἄνδρεσσιν ἀνάσσειν
 ἀλλὰ γ' ἐναντίον αὐτε θέλειν ὑπὸ ἀνδρὶ δαμῆναι
 ὥς περ θηλυτέρων κούρων νομίμη φύσις ἐστί. (275)

Ψευδοκύνες μὲν σφιν στυγεροὶ ἐχθροὶ τε τύκοντο
 ἀλλ' ἄνδρας νομίμους ποθέουσιν ὥς ἐπέοικεν.

But those tailed-women who were left behind on the planet ruled the men as their hearts bid them, and gradually the men themselves transformed little-by-little and became idiots and four-footed like beasts. And joyful from this, they ruled the fake-dogs, since they also called them 'dogs', but many fine technologies have stopped working. For these females didn't lack reason as women, but rather the sharpness of mind which the works of mechanical technologies as well as the other works of men have come into being from. And so even their knowledge of how to journey across the universe has perished, as well as the other technologies that they previously possessed on the planet. We arrived at this planet after sailing amongst the stars. For I wouldn't wish to tell you everything about all the dangers and what we men endured, but I shall tell you and you should keep it in your mind. that the tailed-girls no longer want to lord over men, but rather the opposite, they want to be dominated by men, as is the ordinary nature of female girls. The fake-dogs have become ugly and hateful to them, but long for ordinary men, as is fitting.

*Εἴ κεν νῦν ἦλθης πλάνην τῶν κερκογυναικῶν
σὺν ἐτάροις λύσης πάντων προβλήματα πικρὰ
κουράων ἰδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἰδίόιο τε σεῖο.* (280)

*Ἀλλὰ γε νῦν νῆας κραιπνὰς ἐτάρους τε ἐτοίμα
πλήσατε πρὸς κούρας καὶ ἐγὼν ὁδὸν ἡγεμονεύσω.»*

᾽Ὡς ἐφάμην· γήθησε μένος ἱερὸν βασιλῆος.

*Αὐτίκ' ἀναΐζας κλισίηφιν ραδιόφωνον
χειρὶ λάβεν στιβαρῇ κάλεσεν καὶ πάντας ἐταίρης.* (285)

Ἦρξαν ἐτοιμάζειν τὰ ἅ περ πρέπε ἀστροπορευτῆς.

*Ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἐπαύριον ἦν τε φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠὼς
(ξεινιακὴ τῇ ἡμετέρῃ οὐ πως εὐκυῖα)*

*νῆες αὐτογόνων λείπον πλάνην πολύλαον
τὸν σφέτερον· καὶ ἐγὼ σὺν ἐμοῖς ἐσθλοῖς ἐτάροισιν* (290)

εἰς κόσμον πετόμην εἰν Τόλμῃ νηὶ μελαίνῃ

καὶ τε κυβερνάων τούτων ὁδῶν ἡγεμόνευσα.

*Ἦσαν μὲν ἀνδρῶν δέκα νῆες ἀστοπορευταὶ
μῆ καὶ δεκάτῃ ἡ ἡμετέρῃ καὶ ἔεσκεν.*

Εἵκοσι μὲν πλέομεν κάτα γ' ἡματ' ἐπιχθονομέτρα (295)

ἀλλὰ τῷ εἰκοστῷ φάνε πλάνης κερκογυναικῶν.

Ἐσσύμενοι ζαπέδῳ ἔχομεν νῆας εὐτύκτους

αἷψ' ἐκβαίνοντες ἔχομεν πλάνῃ πόδας αὐτοί.

Βῆμεν ἴμεν ποτὶ ἄστν γυναικῶν κερκοφορευτῶν

οὐδ' ἄρ' ἄνευ ὅπλων ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν. (300)

Πάντες γὰρ ἔχομεν κάπησιν ἀμύμονα ὅπλα,

*οἷά τε συγγραφέες σαῖ-φαῖ *φείσους* καλέουσιν.*

If you should now come to the planet of the tailed girls with your companions, you would solve all the bitter problems that belong to the girls, to the man, and to your very self. But now prepare your fast ships and companions, sail to the girls, and I shall lead the way!"

So I spoke, and his royal holiness rejoiced. I immediately seized the radiophone with my strong hand after leaping from the couch, and summoned all my companions. They began to prepare what they needed for a journey amongst the stars. But when dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered (a strange one that didn't resemble ours at all), the native men's ships abandoned their own populous planet. I, as well as my fine companions, also flew into the cosmos in our black ship, the Tolma, and I led the way as the pilot. These men had ten ships capable of space-travel, and the eleventh was ours. We sailed for twenty days (in the Earthly measure), but on the twentieth day the planet of the tailed women appeared. Darting to the ground, we moored the well-built ships, and, immediately disembarking, we put our feet on the planet. We went to go to the city of the tail-bearing women, but not without weapons, as experience had taught us. For we had many excellent weapons in our pockets, the kind sci-fi writers call 'phasers'.

Book M

*[Ἀνδρογυνομαχία.⁵¹² Οὐδείς δεσμώτης καὶ μονομάχος.
Ροβότων ἀριστεία. Τοῦ βασιλῆος ἀδικία]*

Οὕτως μὲν ποτὶ ἄστῳ γυναικῶν ἦομεν ἄμμες
 φείσοισιν ἀραρόντες ἕως γε τὰ πρῶτα ἔειπον
 οὐ μοῦνοι· σὺν ἄμμι πολεῖς τροχέοντο ῥοβῶται
 ἔκ γε μετάλλοισιν πάντες· τοὺς μὲν βιοπλάστους
 νηϋφιν ἐϋκτιμένηφιν ἐάσαμεν ὥς πολυρήκτους (5)
 πάντας θηροῖδας ῥοβότους τε μάλιστα δὲ Φράντην
 παμπόλλων γλώσσω μεταθήτορα θαύματα τέχνης
 μήδε τε συνκύρση δεῖνον· μάλα δ' ἄξιος ἦεν⁵¹³
 ἀλλὰ γε τὴν γλώσσην κουράων κερκοφορεύτων
 τήνδε μετήνεγκέν γέ τιςιν μικροῖς ῥοβότοιςιν (10)
 προυνοίης μούνης μετατίθεσθαί γε μεταξὺ
 ἀνδρῶν αὐτογόνων τε γυναικῶν κερκοφορεύτων.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα τιν' ἔχομεν μεταθήτορα ἄμμες ἐταῖροι
 ὥς ἔχομεν Φράντην· τόδε νήπιοι οὐκ ἐνοίησα
 ὥς πολὺ κέρδιον αὐτ' εἶη Φράντην ἐάσεσθαι (15)
 νηϋφιν ἐϋκτιμένηφιν ὅτε κίνδυνος μ' ἐπίκειτο.

⁵¹² This word is clearly modelled after the *Batrachomyomachia*.

⁵¹³ Remember that according to the narrative of the epic, Franta is the one who has written this epic in Homeric Greek, could Franta be making his own edits to increase his own glory? The entire epic does linger on Franta's importance, especially in communication. cf. note on *Astr.* 21.155.

Book 12

[The battle between men and women. Oudeis in chains and the duel. The finest hour of the robots. The king's injustice]

And so we were heading to the city of women, furnished with phasers (as mentioned earlier), and not alone, since there were robots heading to the city along with us who were all comprised of metal. We left those who were moulded from living flesh in the well-built ships, since all the robots of animal form were very breakable, Franta most of all, the translator of all kinds of languages, a wonder of technology, nothing dangerous could happen to him, because he was very valuable. But he transferred this language of the tail-bearing girls to certain small robots for a single purpose, to translate between the local men and the tail-bearing women. But my companions and I didn't have a translator, since we had Franta. I – fool that I am – didn't realise the following: that it would have been much better to have left Franta back in the well-built ship, since I was in danger.

Τῷ μὲν ἄνευ γλώσσης τύχομεν ὡς ἄνδρας ἄναυδοι
οὔδε μὲν αὐτόγονοις φωτέσσιν οὔδε γυναιξίν
μύθεσθαι δυνατοί· τόδε γὰρ τύχε αὐτοματόν περ
συγκυρή ἔργων τε κακὸν μάλα φαίνεται' ὀπίσσω. (20)

Καὶ μετὰ τοῖς ρόβοτος Ἴβω φοίτησεν ἀγαννὸς
ἡμέτερος ρόβοτος πολεμιστῆς ὅπλοφορεύτης⁵¹⁴
τῷ γε τύπῳ τὸν μὲν *ΡΟΒΟΚΟΠ* κλῆσιν καλέουσιν
πολλοῖσιν ἄραρῶς φείσροισιν δεινοφόροισιν
τῷ μὲν Ἴβω ὄνομ' ἔσκεν ἐπεὶ ῥα σιδήρως ἦεν. (25)
Οὗτός τοι ρόβοτος σὺν ἅμιν ἦλθε πόλινδε
Ἴβω ὀπλίτης πάντων ἐτάρων μέγα ἔρκος.

Βῆμεν ἴμεν πρὸς ἄστν γυναικῶν κερκαρορεύτων
οὐ μὲν τῆς πόλεμόν περ οἴσαμεν ἡέτ' ὄλεθρον
ἀλλὰ δέ τ' αὐτόγονοι ἄνδρες μνᾶσθαι ἐθέλοντο (30)
ὅπλα τε καὶ ροβότους ἔχομεν φρόνιμοι ἐπεὶ εἴμεν.

Ἀλλὰ γε ταὶ κοῦραι τείχεσσιν φυλάκεσσαί
ἦρξαν σαλπίζειν μὲν ἐπεὶ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
ἄνδρας⁵¹⁵ καὶ ροβότους προσερχόμενους ποτὶ ἄστν
οὐ τι γὰρ εἰρώτησαν ἐπεὶ φόβος εἴλε νόημα (35)

καὶ πολλαὶ τείχη ἄνα νῦν δράμον κερκογυναῖκες
ἐν παλάμηφιν ἔηφιν ἔχουσαι ὅπλα ἐκάστη
πυροβολεύματα πικρὰ τὰ μὲν «*τουφῆκι*»⁵¹⁶ καλοῦσιν
καινότεροι Δαναοί.⁵¹⁷ (*ἀρχαῖοι οὐ τάδ' ἔχοντο*)
τοῖσιν ἐρχομένους κοῦραι ἦρξαν ἐπιβάλλειν. (40)

⁵¹⁴ cf. *Astr.* 5.353-356.

⁵¹⁵ Křesadlo has written ἄνδα but this is clearly a spelling mistake.

⁵¹⁶ = Modern Greek word for 'rifle', τουφέκι, cf. *Astr.* 1.176.

⁵¹⁷ New vs. Old, lit. 'newer/more novel Danaans', vs. the ἀρχαῖοι, 'ancient' Greeks; n.b. also the Homeric term 'Danaan' being used to refer to the modern Greeks of the future.

And so we were languageless, like men who are unable to speak, since we were unable to communicate with the local men nor with the women. For it happened by accident, by the coincidence of actions, and it was later revealed to be very wicked. The brilliant Ivo walked alongside these robots too, our weaponised, combat robot, the type that are referred to by the name ROBOCOP, which are furnished with many kinds of fear-inducing phasers. His name was Ivo since he was made of iron.⁵¹⁸ And so this robot, Ivo, came along with us to the city, the great weaponised defender of all my companions. We went to go to the city of the tail-bearing women, but we didn't bring them war or destruction, but rather the local men wanted to mingle with them, and we had weapons and robots because we were sensible. But the girls on guard at the wall began to sound the trumpets when they saw with their own eyes men and robots approaching their city. They questioned nothing, since fear had seized their minds, and many tailed women now ran back to the walls, each carrying in their hands a weapon, bitter firearms that more modern Greeks call 'rifles' (the ancient ones didn't have these); the girls began shooting those who were approaching with these.

⁵¹⁸ Weise (2024:276-7) says that the robot Ivo is named after Ivo Železný, Křesadlo's publisher, and is called σιδήρεος ('made of iron') because Ivo's surname 'Železný' also means 'made of iron'.

Ἡμεῖς δείσαντες χαμάδις πέσομεν τάχα πάντες
 κρυψάμενοι κατόπιν πέτρων θάμνων τε δρυῶν τε
 τάφρων καὶ τρήμων καὶ κύματα γῆς οἷ ἔεσκεν
 ἐρπόμενοι προβάδην βάλομεν φεῖσροις ὀλοοῖσιν.
 Μοῦνος Ἴβω ρόβοτος φοιτᾶν ὀρθῶς ἐπι μεῖνε (45)
 καὶ ἄλλοι ρόβοτοι· Προγράματα οὐ γὰρ ἔειχον
 καππίπτειν⁵¹⁹ χαμάδις εἴ τις ἥρξειε βάλεσθαι.
 Εἰς τούτους κοῦραί γε μολυβδαίνης⁵²⁰ ὀλοῇσιν
 σφόδρα βάλλον ροβότους· κόναβος γενετ' ὥς ἐβάλλοντο,⁵²¹
 οὐδὲ τέ τι βλαβερὸν ρόβοτοις ἐδύναντο ποιῆσαι (50)
 τοῖς ἀδαμαντίνοις τε μεταλλικοῖς μὲν ἄπασιν.
 Οἱ μὲν ἐρχόμενοι ἔβαλον φεῖσροις ὀλοοῖσιν
 καὶ πολλὰ δὲ κόραι φεῖσροις λυγροῖς βλήθησαν
 βλήμεναι ἐξαπίνης διεφήσαντ' ἡὔτ' ὀμίχλη
 καὶ μὲν ἄφανται ἔφυν κοῦραι καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκον. (55)
 Ἀλλὰ γε νῦν θρασύθυμοι ἔφυν καὶ αὐτμοφιλοῦσαι
 οὐδ' ἄναχῶρησαν καὶ θυμῷ σφόδρα μάχοντο
 καὶ νῦν εἰς τεῖχῃ μέγα πυροβόλον ἄνα ἦραν
 καὶ ἥρξαν βαλέμεν ροβότους αὐτούς τε καὶ ἄνδρας.

⁵¹⁹ = καταπίπτω (modelled on the poetic aor. form κάππεσον: the only form used in Homer, e.g., *Iliad* 1.593, 4.523, 5.560, 12.23, etc., *Odyssey* 5.374, 12.414, 22.85).

⁵²⁰ In the sense here as 'bullet' cf. Lucian *Lexiphanes* 5.

⁵²¹ The ringing sound that is produced could have meta-poetic resonances.

In fear, we all quickly fell to the ground, hiding behind rocks, bushes, and trees, in ditches and holes, and wherever there were waves in the ground, crawling forwards we shot our deadly phasers. Only Ivo the robot stayed upright as he went about, and so did the other robots. Because they had no program to drop down to the ground if someone began shooting at them. The girls shot very deadly bullets at these robots, and there was a ringing sound when they were hit, but they couldn't cause any harm to the robots, who were made out of steel and many kinds of metals. Those who were approaching shot their deadly phasers and many girls were hit by the baneful phasers, and the ones that had been struck immediately became transparent just like a mist, and then the girls became invisible and no longer existed. But now they became courageous and love for the heat of battle, they didn't retreat, and fought very bravely, and now lifted up a large cannon to the top of the walls and began shooting the robots and the men.

Πλῆξαν τὸν ρόβοτον Ἴβωα μάλ' ἄλκιμον αὐτμῆς (60)
 καὶ τὸν μὲν βλάψαν σφαίρη καὶ κυλλὸν ἔτευξαν
 ὥς ὅγε οὐ φοιτᾷν οὐ μάρνασθαι γε δύναίτο,
 ἀλλὰ πέσεν χαμάδις καὶ ἀμήχανος⁵²² αἶψα τέτυκτο
 οὕτως ἐφθίθην ἀνδρῶν μέγα ἔρκος ἀγαινῶν
 καὶ ἄλλους ροβότους βλαβερῆς σφαίρησι ἐβαλλον (65)
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μαρναμένησιν
 πυροβόλοισι βάλλειν ὥς ἄμμες φέρτεροι ὄντες
 φείσρους καινότερους ἔχομεν μάλα καρτερὰ ὄπλα.⁵²³
 Τούτων μὲν τείχη πόλεος μεγάλας τε πύλας τε
 ἀκτίνης ὀλῆσι γε πορθήσαντες ἔβημεν (70)
 φείσρους σείοντες μάλα γὰρ φρένας εἴλετο μῆνις.⁵²⁴
 Αἱ μὲν ἡχοῦσαι κατάβαλον ἀμύμωνα ὄπλα
 καὶ γουνησάμεναι αἶτησαν ἄνδρα ἕκαστον
 ψυχὰς φείδεσθαι νενικημέναι ὥς ἐγένοντο.
 Αὐτίκα ὥς ἦθος θηλείης ἐστὶ γυναιξίν (75)
 κινδυνευομένης εἴ περ κρατερὴ σφιν ἀνάγκη
 ἦρξαν γυμνωθῆναι ἐκ εἵμασι πᾶσι ἅπασαι
 αὐτὰς προυχόμεναι κρυπτάς γε πύλας φιλότητος.
 Τοῖσιν δερκομένοισιν ἐθέλξατο θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ
 αὐτοὶ ἐκδυσαν ἰδὲ καὶ φιλότῃτι μίγοντο. (80)

⁵²² ἀμήχανος lit. means 'without devices', but is usually used to mean 'at a loss, helpless' (commonly used of Jason in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, cf. note on *Astr.* 7.200): the act of crippling a robot plays on both of these meanings, since Ivo has both literally and figuratively lost his *mechanai*.

⁵²³ New vs. Old, the 'newer/more novel' phasers are compared to the robots with their older weaponry, such as rifles, which are described like an epic rock-throwing episode, cf. note on *Astr.* 3.140, cf. also *Astr.* 8.140.

⁵²⁴ *Menis* usually refers to divine wrath in epic, except for Achilles (cf. *Iliad* 1.1): here again the astronauts are godlike in terms of possessing advanced technology, cf. note on *Astr.* 10.63.

They struck the robot Ivo, who was very strong in battle, and damaged him with a cannonball and crippled him, so he was unable to either walk or fight, but rather fell to the ground and was suddenly made helpless. And so the mighty defender of us brilliant men broke down, and they shot our other robots with harmful cannonballs, but even so, no solution revealed itself to them as they fought to shoot with their firearms, since we were better, because we had more recently invented phasers, very powerful weapons. After destroying their walls and the mighty gates of their city with deadly rays, we entered whilst brandishing our phasers, because wrath seized our minds completely. Then they threw down their excellent weapons with a chirp, and, clasping their knees, begged each man to spare their lives now that they'd been conquered. Immediately, as is the custom of women if they're in danger and facing powerful constraint, they all began to strip off all their clothes, offering their very own concealed gates of love. The courageous hearts of the men who saw them clearly were charmed, and they themselves got undressed and mingled with them in love.

- Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἦλθον ζητοῦν κούρην βασιλείην
 τὴν πρὶν ἐγὼ παράκοιτιν ἐμὴν μεγάρουσι ἔθηκα
 ἥματι τῷ, τῷ τῇ γ' ἐδόθην ὡς ψευδοκῶν τις
 (ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ κατέλεξα ἐν ἸΩΤΑ πρὶν ἀοίδῃ).⁵²⁵
- Καὶ τὴν μὲν ἔγνων ἐν ὁμίλῳ κερκογυναικῶν (85)
 γούνων ἀπτομένην βασιλῆος· τόνδε κίχησα
 καὶ γε γυμναομένῳ ἔπεα πτεροέοντα προσηύσων·
 «Τίπτε φέριστε⁵²⁶ θέλεις ταύτῃ φιλότῃ μιγῆναι
 κούρῃ τὴν περ ἐγώνη ἐμὴν ἐποίησα ἄκοιτιν;
 Πολλὰ γὰρ ἄλλαι εἰσὶν κοῦραι τε γυναῖκες (90)
 τοὶ πορνευέμεναι· εἴ πέρ τινα θυμὸς ἄνωγοι
 ἀλλὰ γε τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κούρην ἔασον, πέπον, οἶην.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην· ὅδε μοί τι ἁμείβετο κοίραμος ἀνδρῶν
 ἀχνύμενος· φρένας εἴλε κότος τ' ἀλαδὸς δέ τε μῆνις (95)
 οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστατο τὴν ῥήμην μου οὐ περ ἐγὼ μιν
 ἀλλὰ γε σχῆμα ἔην τυπικόν⁵²⁷ φανερόν τε ἐκάστω·
 Ἄνδρε δύω κοτέον τε γυναικεῖου διὰ χάρμα.
 Νῶϊ δὲ μαρναμέναι τείχει μεμαόντε ἔστητον,
 ἀλλὰ γυνὴ κοράμη σημαίνησεν ἀποπαῦσαι
 καὶ σήμερισι⁵²⁸ μὲν ἔφη ἀμφοῖν χαρίζεσθαι (100)
 ὡς καὶ ταῦτα γέγοντο τὰ δ' αἰδέομαι καταλέξαι
 ὡς ὑποτεῖησεν τάδε καὶ τῷ ὄντι τέτυκτο.

⁵²⁵ A self-referential comment on the literary nature of the epic, cf. *Astr.* 15.4.

⁵²⁶ cf. *Iliad* 6.123, 15.247, 16.21, 16.722, 19.216, 21.488, 24.387, etc., *Odyssey* 1.405, 9.269, 11.478 etc.

⁵²⁷ i.e., 'conforming to type', archetypal/cliché facial expressions which clearly demonstrate the emotional responses between the two.

⁵²⁸ Communicating using signs/semiotics, instead of with an interpreter such as Franta, cf. note on *Astr.* 9.282.

But I went in search of the girl that was queen, whom I had previously made my concubine in her bedchamber the day when I was given to her as some fake-dog (just as I had previously described in the ninth song). And I recognised her in a crowd of tailed women holding the knees of the king, so I went over to him and addressed him in winged words as he was getting undressed:

“Why, your pre-eminence, do you want to mingle with this girl in love, whom I myself have made my concubine? For there are many other girls and women who’ll have sex with you if their mind bids them, but leave my girl alone, weakling!”

So I spoke, and this lord of men replied to me, vexed. Ill-will, blind-rage, and wrath seized his mind, for he didn’t understand my speech, nor I his, but each of our expressions were plain and typical. The two men held a grudge because of her womanly beauty. We both stood on the wall and intended on duelling, but the queenly woman signalled us to stop, and with signs she said that she would grant herself to us both, and so I’m ashamed to describe the things that happened, since what she suggested happened afterwards.

Οὕτως εἰν πτολιέθρῳ ἔμοι ἐρήρηες ἐταῖροι
 ἄνδρες τ' αὐτόγονοι βασιλεὺς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐγώτην
 ἄστῳ πεπορθότες ἄνδρες ἐρώτων πρῆγμα πέπρηχαν (105)
 κερκοφόροισι γυναιξὶν ἕως καὶ τέρμα πορείης.
 Ὡς πορνεύοντες μένεμεν ἥμος κνέφας ἦλθεν.
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ κατέδῃ ἱερὸν φάος ἡελίοιο
[ζείνου καὶ ἀτόπου οὐδ' ἡμετέρῳ περ εἰόκεν]
 τῷ κάματος ἔλε γυῖα ἐκάστου ἢ ἐκάστης. (110)
 Εὐδομεν εἰν τείχῃ αὐτῷ εἰν κώματι πάντες
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἔφῃ καὶ κρᾶτα κάλυπεν
 οὐδε τινὲς φύλακές περ ἔσαν πόλιν ἢ φυλάσσειν
 ξείνοιο φύλοιο κόραι πτήσαντ' ἀνὰ ἄστῳ.
 Τὰς δὲ φέρον θῆρες μεγάλοι καὶ θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι (115)
 ἵππουκάμποισιν⁵²⁹ μὲν εἰκότες ἀλλὰ πέλωροι
 ἢ δράκουσί τισιν· χαλεπὸν γάρ ἐστι ἐνίσπειν
 καὶ πτέρα μακρὰ ἔχοντες εἰκότα νυκτερίδεσσιν⁵³⁰
 τοῦτοισιν ἐπιβησάμεναι πτήσαντο κόρουνα
 καὶ πέσον εἰς τεῖχος ἡμῖν ἐριδὰ προφέρονται (120)
 ἡμῖν εἰν καμάτῳ οὐκ ἦν ἱς ἀντιμάχεσθαι.
 Ἡμᾶς ὑπνωδεῖς μὲν ἔδησαν δέσμασι πικροῖς
 ἄνδρας σύμπαντας καὶ κερκοφόρους τε γυναικας
 καὶ σφε ποταόμεναι ἔφερον αὐτῶν ποτὶ ἄστῳ.

⁵²⁹ cf. Philostratus the Elder *Imagines* 1.8.

⁵³⁰ n.b., hybrid creatures are a common feature of sci-fi, but in Classical literature the hybridisation of different animals often also symbolises generic experimentation (e.g., Horace *Ars Poetica*, which opens with the image of a horse's head attached to a human's body).

And so my trusty companions in the citadel, as well as the local men, their king, and myself, once we'd plundered the city, enacted erotic deeds on the tail-bearing women, as was the goal of the journey. Thus, we kept on fornicating until darkness came. But when the holy light of the sun had set [alien and unusual, not like our own], then weariness seized the limbs of each man and each woman. We all slept on the walls in a deep slumber, but when sweet sleep came and covered our heads, there were no guards at all to keep the city well-guarded, and girls of an alien tribe flew up to the city. Large beasts, a wonder to behold, carried them, they resembled sea-horses, but monstrous ones, or some kinds of dragons. For it is difficult to describe, and they had long wings that resembled bats. The girls flew, embarking on these, and fell towards the walls, bringing us a quarrel, but since we were in a fatigued state, we had no strength to fight back. They bound us in sharp chains while we were drowsy, all the men together, as well as the tail-bearing women, and carried us to their own city while flying.

Οὐδ' ἄρα τις δύναμίς περ ἔην ἀπαμῦναι ἀγωγὴν⁵³¹ (125)
 φείσους μὲν ἔχομεν κάψῃσιν ἡμετέρησιν
 ἀλλ' ἦμεν γυμνοὶ ἔργων ἔνεκεν καταπύγων
 ὥς καταπυγοςύνῃ ἀπάτησεν⁵³² ἄνδρας ἀρίστους.
 Αἰδ' ἡμᾶς φόρεον κοῦραι πτεροέσσι δράκουσιν
 αἰθέρι ὑψηλῶς τὴν ἀμβροσίην διὰ νύκτα (130)
 δεινῶς γὰρ μεγάλη λάμψεν πλάνου μάλα μήνη
 φάοτι χλωρίνῳ ὥς σῆπται ὥπες ἕασιν
 κλαίοντας μήνει καὶ ἀμηχανίῃ ἔχε θυμόν.
 Καὶ γε βάδην τε βάδην ἐφάνη ὄρεα σκιοέντα
 ὑψηλαὶ κορυφαὶ μεγάλοι τε πάγοι σπιλάδες τε (135)
 καὶ τὰ ὑπερ πετάσασαι ἔβαν κοῦραί τε καὶ ἡμεῖς
 ὥς δ' ἔφερον μεγάλοι αἰσχροὶ νώτοισι δράκοντες.
 Αὐτίκα καὶ ἐφάνη κούρων αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον
 οἱ κάτα δ' ἐσσύμενοι θῆρες στήσαν πεδίοιο.
 Αἰ κοῦραι δ' ἐχθραὶ (ταὶ καὶ κέρκους ἔχον αὐταί)
 δεσμοῖς δεσμηῶτας⁵³³ αὖ ἀνδρίχα μερίζαντο.⁵³⁴
 Τὰς μὲν ἀλικομένας ἦγον πόρρῳ κατὰ ἄστυ
 ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς φῶτάς γε βάλλον βάραθρον κυάνουνδε
 γοργύρηνδε ἀεικελίην τὴν εἶχον ἐν ἄστει
 ἡμεῖς μὲν κλαίοντες ἐπευχομέναι μεμάαμεν (145)
 εἰ κέν τις ζῶη θεὸς εἴν κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν⁵³⁵
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο εὐχομένοισιν.

⁵³¹ *Agoge* is also a kind of ancient Greek love-spell usually performed by a man to make an inaccessible woman accessible.

⁵³² Gnostic aorist.

⁵³³ = δεσμώτης.

⁵³⁴ = μερίζω.

⁵³⁵ Protasis of a 'vivid future' conditional (εἰ + ἄν + subj., 'if *by chance*...'), we'd expect the apodosis to be in the future or aorist tense, but we are surprised with an imperfect indicative, a 'past general' conditional ('*but no solution would*...').

We had no power at all to ward off the abduction. We had phasers in our pockets, but we were naked because of our perverse deeds: this is how carnal lust outwits the best men.⁵³⁶ The girls carried us with their winged dragons high up in the air through the divine night, for this planet's large moon shone terribly with greenish light, just as putrefied faces are; we were weeping with rage, and a sense of helplessness seized our minds. And gradually shadowy mountains appeared little-by-little, lofty peaked, large, rocky, and stony, and the girls came flowing over them, and so did we, since the great, ugly dragons carried us on their backs. Suddenly the girls' lofty citadel also appeared, and then after flowing down, the beasts stood on the plain. And the hostile girls (who were also tailed themselves) divided us prisoners amongst themselves by our chains into two groups. They led the captive women onwards to their city, but they threw us men into a dark pit, a shabby dungeon that they had in the city. We tried to pray as we wept, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, but no solution would reveal itself to us as we prayed.

⁵³⁶ Homily/sententia.

- Ὡς καταπυγοςύνη ἀπάτησεν ἄνδρας ἀρίστους.
 Οὕτως μὲν κλαίοντες ἐμείναμεν ἥοα δῖαν.
 Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠώς (150)
[ξείνακῃ οὐ πως τῇ ἡμετέρῃ ἐϋκυῖα]
 ἦλθε κόρη γ' ἐχθρὴ χεῦεν κάτ' ἀεικέ' ἐδωδὴν
 εἰν πίστῃ⁵³⁷ μεγάλη ὥς τοῖς ῥυπαροῖσι σύεσσι
 εἰν ἐτέρῃ χεῦεν δ' ἡμῖν πινέμεν μέλαν ὕδωρ
 καὶ πόρρω ἦλθεν καὶ οὔτι τὸ ῥῆμα ἔειπεν. (155)
 Ἔργον αὐτότατον πρήσσεσκεν ἡμασι πᾶσιν
 οὐδ' ἄλλον ζῶον δὲ φάνη ποτὲ μυρομένοισιν.
 Ταύτη γοργύρη μὲν ἔχον ἡμᾶς διὰ μῆνα
 γυμνοὺς καὶ οἰκτροὺς ἥως θῆρας δ' ἐπὶ φάτνῃ
 οὐ γάρ τις ὁδὸς ἄμμι φάνη βερέθρην ὑπαλῦξαι (160)
 αἰπεῖη μάλα δ' ἦν ἰδὲ καὶ στερεοῖο λίθοιο
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἄνω κιγκλὶς κρατερὴ πύλη ἐπείκειτο.
 Ὡς εἰν γοργύρῃ καταφθίνετο ἡματα πολλὰ
 ἡμῖν δύστηνοῖς καὶ οἰκτροῖς· οὔτι τύχησε.
 Τούτων οὐκ ἴδμεν αἰτίην ἢ λόγον τε (165)
 οὐ μὲν ἀλισκομένων σὺν ἡμῖν αὐτε γυναικῶν
 ποῦ δ' ἦσαν καὶ τι πρῆσσαν τινα πότμον ἔχοντο
 ἀλλ' εἰν τῇ τρώγλῃ μένεμέν γ' ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ.

⁵³⁷ = πίστρα.

This is how carnal lust outwits the best men. And so we awaited the bright dawn while weeping. But when Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [a strange one that didn't resemble ours at all], a hostile girl came and poured down disgusting food into a large trough, just as for greasy pigs, and in another she poured dark water for us to drink and went back out without saying a word. She would do the very same work every day, and no other living creature every appeared before us as we wept. They kept us in this dungeon for a month, naked and pitiable like beasts in a manger. For no way to escape the pit appeared before us at all, since it was very steep and comprised of solid rock, but also a strong grate lied above us over the opening. So many of our days were wasted in the dungeon, wretched and pitiable, since nothing happened. We didn't know the cause and reason for this, nor of the women captured along with us, where they were, and what they were doing, or what their fate was, but we stayed in the hole with sorrowful hearts.

Εἰς τέλος ἀθλιότης μέτα περ βάλετ'⁵³⁸ ἢ καὶ ἔνοχλος
 ἡμῖν δύστηνοις εἰς κίνδυνόν τε μόρον τε. (170)

Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠώς
[ξεινιακὴ οὗ πως τῇ ἡμετέρῃ ἐϋκυῖα]
 ἦματι τῷ, τῷ δ' ἄμμι φάνη μοῖρη θανάτοιο
 τῆμος πρὸς βερέθρην ἦλθόν τινες ἐχθρογυναῖκες
 τουφηκέσσιν ἐῆς ἄλλοις τ' ὅπλοις ἀραρυῖαι. (175)

Ἡὔρον νῦν κιγκλὶν καὶ στῆσαν κλίμακα μακρὴν
 καὶ σημαίνησαν ὥς ἐκ τρώγλης ἀναβῆναι.
 Ἐνθ' ἄλλοι πολλοὶ φόβειον ἀναβῆναι ἐταῖροι
 καὶ ἄνδρες πλάνου τοὶ ἦλθον σὺν βασιλῆϊ
 ἀλλ' ἄλλοι φῶτες βάθρην ἔθελον ὑπαλῦξαι (180)
 πολλὰ δ' ἐνοχλόμενοι ὥς μείριζαν⁵³⁹ φρένες ἄνδρῶν.

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ βοῦρδά τε καὶ βασιλεὺς ἀπὸ πλάνου
 καὶ δ' ἄλλοι φῶτες βάθρην πότι ἦλθομεν αἶψα
 καὶ ἄνα ἐρχόμενοι βερέθρηφι πύλῃ ἀνέδυμεν.
 Μία γυνὴ τούτων τῶν φωτῶν λέξεν ἀριθμόν. (185)

Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ δέκα λέξε γυνὴ φῶτας μεγαθύμους
 ἄψ ἔρυσαν καταβάθραν⁵⁴⁰ ἄνω τε πύλῃν κεκάλυφαν.
 Ἦμᾶς μὲν γυμνοὺς ἄνδρας γ' ἦγον ποτὶ ἄστν
 τῶν ὑπο τουφεκέων λυγρῶν ἄλλων δέ τε ὅπλων.

⁵³⁸ n.b., μεταβάλλω is also a technical word for translation.

⁵³⁹ = μερίζω.

⁵⁴⁰ = καταβαθμός (i.e., *katabasis*).

In the end, the suffering and annoyance transformed into danger and doom for us wretched souls. But when Dawn appeared, fresh and rosy-fingered [a strange one that didn't resemble ours at all], on that day which our appointed time of death was revealed, then some hostile women came to the pit, furnished with their rifles and other weapons. Now they lifted the grate and set up a long ladder, and gave us signs to climb up out of the hole. Many of my other companions were afraid to climb up at that time, as well as the men of the planet who had come with their king, but other men wanted to escape the pit, since they were very troubled, and so the minds of men were divided. But I, and Burda, and the king from that planet, as well as some other men, quickly approached the steps, and climbing up we emerged from the open hole. A single woman counted the number of these men. But when the woman counted ten high-spirited men, they pulled back up the downward steps and covered the opening. They led us naked to their city, under the eye of their deadly rifles and other weapons.

- Ὅρθρος καινὸς⁵⁴¹ ἔην κεναὶ ἦσαν πᾶσαι ἀγνυαὶ (190)
καὶ τε ποδῶν δουπὸς γ' ἤχησεν τὰς κατὰ ρύμας
ἡμεῖς ἐρχόμενοι ξεῖνον θαυμάζομεν ἄστν.
Ἦν ἐὺ περ κτίμενον λευκοῖς ξεστοῖσι λίθοισιν
μορφῆσιν τ' ἀτόποισι περισσοῖς πυργιδίοισιν.⁵⁴²
Ἦγον μὲν κοῦραι ἄτοπον ποτὶ οἰκοδόμημα. (195)
Εἶατο μὲν ἡμῖν εἰκὸς παλαί' ἄμφιθεήτρῳ
ὥς ποτε δ' ἀρχαῖοι ἔχεμεν Ῥωμαῖοι εἴωθαν
ὦ γλαδιατῶρες μεμαχίσαντ' ἀλλήλοισιν
ἀγροτέροισί τε θηρέσιν καὶ τῷ χριστιᾶνοι⁵⁴³
τῶν ὑπὸ αὐτοτάτων θηρῶν χέαν αἷμα κελαινόν. (200)
Τούτον οἰκοδόμησις ἔφην εἶναι ἐϋκυῖα.
Ἦγον εἰς θύρην τε καταχθόνιον λαβύρινθον
καὶ μὲν ἐπεὶ κατέοιζαν⁵⁴⁴ ἐνὶ κρύπτῃ τινὶ φῶτας.
Ἦνεγκαν δ' εἴσω μῆκον σωλῆν' ἀπὸ κόμμι
τῷ μὲν ὕδρῳσαι κήπους ἦθους χθονὶ ἐστίν (205)
καὶ ῥα διαὶ κιγκλὶν κρύπτῃς καταχεύατο λύμφῃ
ψυχρὴ οὐ θερμὴ· μεγάλως ἰάχοντο ἐταῖροι.
Οὕτως τοι λοῦσαν κόπρῳ ῥερυπωμένα γυῖα.
Ἄλλον δ' ἦνεγκαν κοῦρα σωλῆνα ποτ' εἰργμὰν
ἐκ τῷ μὲν πνεῦεν θερμὸς κατὰ ἄνερας ἀήρ (210)

⁵⁴¹ n.b., καινός is a novelty marker.

⁵⁴² This description of an 'atypical' city is well suited to a meta-poetic reading, especially on New vs. Old, since the white marble evokes the white-washed image of the Classical world, and it goes on to compare the city to a Roman amphitheatre.

⁵⁴³ Note the fact that Křesadlo is evoking a place where ideological dissidents are *performatively* executed by the state, this clearly connects to the performative executions done during the Third Czechoslovak Republic, which also very nearly happened to Křesadlo himself in 1946 (cf. <https://kresadlo.cz/rodokmen.htm> [accessed 24/6/2025]); **spectacle**.

⁵⁴⁴ = κατείργω (?)

The morning was fresh, all the streets were empty, and the thud of our feet resounded throughout the serpentine paths.⁵⁴⁵ We were amazed by the alien city as we walked. It was well-built with white, polished stones, and strange little turrets in unusual shapes. The girls led us to an extraordinary building. We found it similar to an old-fashioned amphitheatre that the ancient Romans were accustomed to have, in which gladiators would fight with one another, as well as with wild beast, and in which Christians drained their black blood under these very same beasts. This building seemed to be similar. They led us through a door into an underground labyrinth,⁵⁴⁶ and then locked us men in some crypt. Then they brought inside a long pipe made from rubber, which it is the custom on Earth to water a garden with,⁵⁴⁷ and cold water (not warm) was poured down through the grate of the crypt, and my companions gave loud shouts. And so they washed our limbs that were squalid with shit. And then a girl brought another pipe into the prison, out of which warm air blew down on us men:

⁵⁴⁵ ῥεῦμα lit. describes ‘something that flows’, especially rivers and streams, hence my translation ‘serpentine paths’, to try and get the image of meandering or winding streets implied by ῥεῦμα.

⁵⁴⁶ An underground labyrinth automatically brings to mind the myth of the minotaur’s labyrinth in Knossos.

⁵⁴⁷ i.e., a garden hose.

οὕτως ταὶ ἡμᾶς λοῦσαν τ' ἀποξηραίνησαν.
 Εἰν ὀλίγῳ κέλαδον μὲν ἀκούσαμεν ἤντε πολλῶν
 ἐρχομένων ζώων θηλείας καὶ ἰδὲ φωνὰς
 παμπόλλας· φανερώς ῥα ἀγερομένων ἅμα κούρων.
 Εἰς εἰργὸν δ' ἦλθον παμπόλλαι αὖτε γυναῖκες. (215)
 Ταὶ μὲν ὅπλωισιν ἦσιν φῶτας διάστειλον
 τεύχεα ταὶ δὲ φέρον τὰ παλαιὰ φωτὶ ἐκάστω
 θώρηκας ἰδὲ καὶ κόρυθας καὶ κνημίδας τε
 καὶ ἡμῖν δεῖξάν γε ὀπλίζεσθαι πολέμονδε.
 Τῆς πάντες ῥα πίθοντο ἐπεὶ γ' ὅπλά τοι εἶχον (220)
 οὔδ' ἄρα φάσγανον ὅξυ δέδωκαν φωτὶ ἐκάστω
 οὐ δόρυ οὐ σάκος αὐτὸ δέδωκαν ἴφι μάχεσθαι
 ἀλλὰ κορυσσαμένους θωρηθέντας περ ἀνόπλους
 τῶν ὑπὸ τουφεκίων λυγρῶν ἄλλων δέ τε ὅπλων
 ἦγον τῆς διόδοισι καταχθονίου λαβυρίνθου (225)
 πρὸς θύρας χθαμαλὰς γε πολυκμήτοιο σιδήρου
 πάντας ἐξεῖης καὶ μουνάκι ἄνδρα ἕκατον
 μοῦνον εἰς εἰργμὸν τι πάλιν κρατεροῖς κλείθορσι
 καὶ τε μὴν εἰν παλάμῃφι τὸ φάσγανον ὅξυ τέθηκας
 ἀσπίδα καὶ κρατερὴν· πέμψαν δέ τ' ἄνω ἐνὶ εἰργμῷ (230)
 ὥς μὲν ἀνελκιστήρι⁵⁴⁸ ἕως καινοὶ καλέουσιν.

⁵⁴⁸ Modelled on the modern Greek word for 'elevator',
 ανελκυστήρας.

this is how they washed and dried us. A little while later, we heard a loud sound like that of many beings approaching and of all kinds of women's voices. Clearly there was a gathering of girls at an assembly happening at the same time. Then many women came to the prison. Some separated the men with their weapons, and others gave each man armour, the ancient kind, such as breastplates, helmets, and greaves, and instructed us to arm ourselves for war. We all obeyed them since they aimed their weapons at us, but they didn't give each man a sharp sword, nor a spear or a shield with the strength for battle. But they led us, furnished with helmets and breastplates but not weapons, under the power of their deadly rifles and other weapons, to a passage through the underground labyrinth, and through low gates comprised of elaborately wrought iron. Then they led every and each man in a row one by one back into some kind of solitary cell with strong bars, and placed a sharp sword in his hands, and a strong shield, and sent him up in the cell that new men call an 'elevator'.

Καὶ πάλιν ἐλκιστήρ ἦλθεν κενός· αἶδε γυναῖκες
 ἔγγιστον ἔλον ἄνδρ' ἔτ' ὄπλιστον καὶ ἀποπέμψαν,
 καὶ δέ τε μοῦνος ἐγὼν ἔστην εἰργμοῦ ἐνὶ μέσσω.
 αἷ μὲν ὄπλισαν ἰδὲ καὶ μέ γ' ἄνω ἀποπέμψαν (235)
 αὐτίκ' ἐγὼν ἀνέδυν δὲ καταχθανίῳ λαβυρίνθῳ
 καὶ εἰργμοῦ θύρας ἴς μηχανικὴ τις ἀνοίγνυ
 ἔκ μὲν ἔβην εἰργμοῦ· ὃ πάλιν κατεδύσατο δ' αὐτός.
 Ἔστην εἰν μέσσω μεγάλου πλατεός τε ἀγῶνος
 τὸν μὲν καὶ στάδιον φῶτες κλῆσιν καλέουσιν (240)
 ἄλλοτε καὶ κίρκον καὶ ἄλλοτε ἀμφιθέητρου.
 Ἀμφ' εἰν ἔδρησιν πάμπολλαι ἦντο γυναῖκες
 κερκοφόραι ξεῖναι τοῦ φύλου τάδ' ἄρπαξαν
 ἄνδρας ἢ ἐ γυναῖκας ἐπεὶ φιλότῃτι μίγοντο.
 Αἷ μεγάῃ ἰάχῃ πρόσφησαν ὥς περ ἔφηνα (245)
 καὶ ἄλλους φῶτας τοὶ ἐξειῆς ἀνάδυσαν
 τεύχεα λαμπρὰ φέροντες εὖς τε μέγας τε ἕκαστος.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ πάντες δέκα φῶτες ἔσαν ἐν ἀγῶνι
 κοῦραι σαλπικταὶ μεγάλῃ ὅτι σαλπίζαντο
 σάλπιγξιν μακρῇσι· καὶ ὥς τρίτατον σάλπιγξαν (250)
 ἀντικρὺς θῦραι μεγάλαι ἐξαῦτις ἀνοίγνυν
 καὶ ἐκ θυράων ἔθεον δέκα αἰσχροὶ πέλωρα
 τοῖσιν ψευδοκύνεσσιν εὐκότα τοὺς μὲν ἔχεσκον
 πρῶται κερκοκόραι τῇσιν νενικήκαμεν ἄμμες

And when the elevator came back empty, these women grabbed the nearest man, and again sent him up with a weapon, but then I stood alone in the middle of the cell. They armed me and sent me up, and I immediately emerged from the underground labyrinth, and some mechanical force opened the gates of the cell, then I stepped out of the cell, which descended back down. I stood in the middle of a great plain and place for contests that men call a 'stadium', and sometimes a 'circus' and sometimes an 'amphitheatre'. Numerous women sat on benches on all sides, the alien tail bearers of the tribe that kidnapped the men and women when they were mingling in love. They addressed me with a great shout when I appeared, as well as the other men when they emerged one by one, carrying resplendent armour, each one beautiful and great. But when all ten men were in the contest area, then the trumpeter girls trumpeted their long trumpets loudly. And when they sounded the trumpets for the third time, the mighty gates opposite opened one by one, and out of the gates came running ten ugly monsters that resembled the fake-dogs that the first tailed girls kept, whom we'd prevailed over.

- ἀλλὰ πολὺ κρατεροὶ ταύτων καὶ μείζονες ἦσαν (255)
 ὥς μεγάλοι ταῦροι καὶ τοῖς στόμασιν μὲν ἔχοντο
 μακροὺς χαυλιόδοντας ἕως σῦες τ' ἐλέφαντες
 σμερδαλέους ὀξέας χαλεποὺς μάλα εἰσοράσθαι.
 Οἱ μὲν ψευδοκυνές πρὸς γ' ἡμᾶς θέντο πέλωροι
 σμερδαλή ὕλακῃ διαδάπειν θυμὸς ἄνωγεν. (260)
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτὸς καὶ ἄλλοι ἄνδρες ἀγαυοὶ
 φάσαν' ἀνεσχόμενοι τάδ' ἐμείναμεν αἰνὰ πέλωρα.
 Εἰς ἐμὲ εἰς δὲ θέεν τῶν ψευδοκύνων ὄχ' ἄρος⁵⁴⁹
 μακρὸς καὶ μαλερὸς φοβερὸς δέ τε εἰσοράσθαι
 χαυλιόδοντας ὀδόντας ἔχων χαλεπῷ ἐνὶ ρύγχῳ (265)
 καὶ ὁδ' ἀνάϊξας ἐθέλեն με διάνδιχα δάψαι
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ μιν ἄλυξα κύφων⁵⁵⁰ ξίφει δέ τ' ἐπλήγα
 εἰς κεφαλὴν· αὐτίς κεφαλῇ θόρε αἶμα κελαινόν.
 Σμερδαλέως ὀλόλυσε πέλωρ καὶ ἔμπαλιν ἄλτο
 καὶ χαλεπῶς θρῶσκον· (270)
 μάλα γὰρ θρασὺ κνώδαλον ἦεν
 ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἐγὼ πάλιν αὖ χαλύβῳ πέπληξα φαεινῷ
 σμερδαλέως ἱαχόν γ' ἀναχώρησεν τέρας αἰνόν.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ τὸ τέταρτον⁵⁵¹ ἔσσευεν μακρὰ ὕλαον
 δεξιτερὴν πλῆξεν κέρκῳ στιβαρὴν κατὰ χεῖρα
 ἐκ παλάμηφιν ἐμεῖο θόρεν χαμάδις γ' ἄορ ὀξὺ (275)

⁵⁴⁹ Very Homeric, cf. *Iliad* 1.69, 2.761, 3.110, 5.843, 6.76, 7.221, 12.344, 12.357, 15.282, 17.307, 23.357, *Odyssey* 3.129, 8.123, 9.420, 9.432, 13.297, 13.365, 15.253, 23.117, 24.429.

⁵⁵⁰ = κύπτω.

⁵⁵¹ Lit. 'for the fourth time', but since this is the **third** time, not the **fourth**, that the monster has leapt at Oudeis, I have translated accordingly.

But these were much stronger and larger than them, like mighty bulls, and attached to their mouths were long tusks, like pigs and elephants, fearful, piercing, very ugly things to behold. These monstrous fake dogs rushed towards us with a fearful howl, their minds encouraged them to rip us to shreds. But the other illustrious men and I awaited the terrible monsters, holding our swords. One of the fake-dogs ran towards me, it was by far the strongest, big and ravenous, and fearful to behold, possessing outstanding tusks in its ugly snout and leaping up it wanted to tear me in two, but I avoided it by ducking down and struck it on the head with my sword, and black blood sprang from its head. The monster gave a fearful cry and leapt up again, cruelly darting at me, for it was a very brave brute, but I struck it again with my resplendent steel; the terrible monster gave an awful shout and retreated. But when it darted at me for the third time, barking loudly, it struck down on my sturdy right hand with its tail, and my sharp sword leapt from my palm onto the ground.

καὶ τυχόμενην μὲν ἄνοπλος ἐγὼ τέρατος διὰ κέρκου
 εἴλειν αὐτὲ θέλησα μάχαιραν ἀλλὰ κύων γε
 ἄλματι αἰνοτάτῳ μακρῷ ἐπὶ ἄλτο ἔμειο
 κάββαλεν⁵⁵² εἰς γαίην λάβε καὶ κτάμεναι μενεαίνων
 θώρηκα θρυψας μεμαῶς μεγάλοισιν ὁδοῦσιν (280)
 τοῦνεκ' ἐγὼν ἐνόησα ἐμὸν τάχα αἰπὺν ὀλεθρον
 ἦε τέλος θανάτου.⁵⁵³ θαυμαστῶς οὐκ ἐφόβησα
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι ἄτοπον τὸ δοάσσατο ἡὔτ' ὄνειρος
 οὐκ ὄντως τυγχανόμενον μοῦνον δέ τε φάσμα
 ἄλλου ὥς φωτὸς δὲ τύχη ἄλλ' οὐπὲρ ἐμεῖο (285)
 ἦδε φύσις πρόφρων θέλγει θνήσκοντι φίλον κῆρ.
 Ἐξαῦτις δὲ ψευδοκύων διεφήνατο μακρὸς
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντον ἔφν τὸ πέλωρ καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκεν
 αὐτίκα σμερδαλέῃ ἰαχῇ ἠκούσθη κερκγυναικῶν
 ἄθλα ὀρομένων πάμπολλαι ἦσαν ἀγῶνι. (290)
 Ὅρθωσας φίλα γυῖα δ' ἐγὼν ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
 τοῦ μεγαλοῦ σταδίου ὕπαιρ Τόλμην ποτάεσθαι
 πλοῖον ἡμέτερον· τόδε φείσροισιν κτάνε πάντας
 ψευδοκύνας μεγάλους τοὶ μάρναντ' ἀνδράσι θῆρες.
 Βλήμενοι ἐξαπίνης διεφήναντ' ἡὔτε ὁμίχλη (295)
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντοι ἔφυν θῆρες καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκον.

⁵⁵² = καταβάλλω.

⁵⁵³ cf. *Iliad* 3.309, 5.553, 9.416, 11.451, 16.502, 16.855, 22.361, *Odyssey* 5.326, 17.476, 24.124

I became unarmed because of the monster's tail, and again I wanted to pick up the sword, but the dog pounced on me with a very terribly long leap, he threw me to the ground and grabbed me, desiring to kill me he intended to crush my breastplate with his long teeth. At this point I realised that utter destruction would soon be upon me, and the finality of death.⁵⁵⁴ I paradoxically wasn't afraid, but rather it seemed unusual to me, like a dream that wasn't really happening and was only a vision, like it was the fate of another man and not my own,⁵⁵⁵ and so nature eagerly charms one's dear heart in death.⁵⁵⁶ When suddenly the large fake-dog became transparent, and then the monster became invisible and no longer existed. I immediately heard a fearful cry come from the tailed women that were watching the combat, since there were many of them in the contest area. Straightening my dear limbs, I saw with my own eyes that our ship the Tolma was flying over the large stadium. And with its phasers it killed all the mighty fake-dog beasts that were fighting us men. Those who'd been shot suddenly became transparent like a mist and then the beasts disappeared and no longer existed.

⁵⁵⁴ My translation of this Homeric phrase is based on Rieu's.

⁵⁵⁵ An epic dream simile, reminiscent of *Aeneid* 12.907-914; n.b., Křesadlo also uses the metaphor of a dream to describe the flow of the creative process, and that he just has to restrain the dream at times if it gets too fantastical (cf. a chat at the Viola literary club 1992 <https://youtu.be/bWm9Bfc9ZGA?si=sn4M4ixkY9NLrrYS> 00:19:09, 00:46:02 [accessed 26/6/2025]).

⁵⁵⁶ Homily/*sententia*.

Αὐτίκα καὶ πλοῖον ἔσθην μέσσω ἔν ἁγῶνι
 καὶ Ἴβω ῥοβότης ἐκ πλοῖον ἄλτο χαμᾶζε
 δεῖνός γ' εἰν πολέμῳ πολλοῖς ἄραρῶς φείσροισιν.
 Φεῖσροις λυγροῖσιν ἔβαλέν τινας ἔγγυς εἰούσας (300)
 κούρας αἰ δέ τ' ἄρ' ἐξαπίνης ἀνέφαντο θάνουσαι.
 Αἰ δ' ἄλλαι πᾶσαι αἰ ἁγῶν ὀρόωντο γυναῖκες
 σμερδαλέη ἰαχῇ δράμεναι μεμανῖαι αἶζαν
 ἐξ ἔδρησι ἑῆς πανικὸν δ' ἔλε δεῖμα ἐκάστην.
 Πουλλαὶ γὰρ πανικῇ φρίκη γε γυναῖκες ὄλοντο (305)
 στεῖφθεισαι⁵⁵⁷ ὑπὸ ποσσὶν ἐπεὶ δραμέοντο φόβουσαι
 εἰ μὴ Φράντα μεταφρήζων νῦν ἄλτο χαμᾶζε
 καὶ μεγάλη φωνὴ μεγαφώνῳ εὖ ἄραρόντι
 γλώσση αὐτοτάτῃ ἐπιτέλλεν αὐθι μένεσθαι
 εἰ μὴ κάκτασθαι⁵⁵⁸ ῥοβότου φείσροισι λυγροῖσιν. (310)
 Ὡς φάτο· αἰ πᾶσαι μὲν ἀκὴν ἔγενοντο σιωπῇ.
 καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν Φράντης προσεφώνεε τὴν βασιλέην
 ἐχθρῶν θηλείων ἣ ἦτο θρόνῳ ἐνὶ μέσσω
 καὶ οἱ εἰς πλοῖον ἀναβάθρ' ἀναβῆναι ἐτέλλεν
 καὶ ἄλλης πυσύρεσσιν ἐπεὶ ἦσαν ὄχ' ἄριστον (315)
 καὶ σὺν τῇ κοράμῃ εἰν μέσσω ἦντο θρόνοισιν.
 Αἶδ' οὐ πιθεσθαί γε θέλον Φράντη πολυγλώσσω
 καὶ Ἴβω ῥόβοκοψ μίην κτάνε τῶν ἐπικούρων.

⁵⁵⁷ = στείβω.

⁵⁵⁸ = κατακτείνω.

The ship immediately stood still in the middle of the contest area, and the robot Ivo leapt from the ship on to the ground, skilful in war, and furnished with many phasers. He shot his deadly phasers at some girls that were nearby who immediately disappeared when they died. But all the other women who were watching the contests tried to run with a fearful cry, shot from their seats, since fear and panic seized each woman. For many women would have perished in shuddering panic, trampled underfoot when they ran in fear, if our translator Franta had not now leapt down to the ground and in a loud voice well-equipped with a megaphone ordered them in their own language to stay in place if they didn't want to be mowed down by the robot's deadly phasers. So he spoke, and all the women silently became quiet. And then Franta addressed the queen of the enemy women who was sat in the middle on her throne, and ordered her to climb the ladder into the ship, as well as four others, since they were by far the best ones, and were sat alongside the queen on the central thrones. They didn't want to obey polyglot Franta and so Ivo the robocop killed one of the attendants.

Αὐτίκα εἰς πλοῖον δ' ἦλθον βασίλεια καὶ ἄλλαι
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ τ' ἔλομεν βασιλείην ἡϋτ' ὄμηρον (320)
 σὺν κούρης ἄλλης αὐτοὶ πλοῖον ἐπίβημεν.

Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν πλοῖον εὖτυκτον
 ἅψ πτάμεθ' εἰς χώραν κουράων εὐμενεάων.
 τοῖς δὲ ποταόμενοις ἡμῖν λέγε Φράντα ἅπαντα
 τῶν πέρι ὅσσα τύχοντο ἐπεὶ κοῦραι ἀπόβησαν (325)

καὶ εἶλον φῶτας ἰδὲ καὶ τὰς εὐ μενετηρας
 θηλείας· ὥρη τῇ σφας ἐποιήσαμεν ἄνδρες
 ἡὔμενεῖς ἡμῖν οὐ θελγήτρ' ἀλλὰ βίηφι
 ὥς τοι μυστικός ἐστι νόος ψυχὴ τε γυναικῶν.
 Πρῶτον μὲν Φράντης ρόβοτος (330)

σκούγκῳ περ εἰκῶς

ᾧρσεν ἀριστότατον μὲν Τόλμη κομπουτῆρα
[κομπουτῆρα δέ μιν βρύθανες ἄνδρες καλέουσιν
ἀλλ' ὃν μὲν Δαναοὶ καλέουσιν ὑπολογιστήν]
 τῷ μὲν συντάξας Φράντης ἦν ραδιοφώνων,
 τῷ σὺν κομπουτῆρι δ' ὁ γ' ἄμμι νηϊ μελαίνῃ (335)
 ἄρχων ἦν πάντων ροβότων σύστημά τε πρῶτον.

Καίσαρά μιν πάντες τούτων ἔνεκεν καλέοντο
 τῷ μὲν Φράντα μεταφίζων συνταγμένος ἦεν.
 Τοῦδ' ᾧρσεν καλέων καὶ μιν ἔπεσιν ἐρέεινε

The queen and the others immediately entered the ship, but when we had taken the queen as a hostage, along with the other girls, we boarded the ship ourselves. The rocket immediately propelled our well-built vessel, and we flew back to the land of the kindly girls. And as we flew, Franta told us everything about what happened when the girls attacked and kidnapped the men and the kindly women. At the time when we men made them well-disposed towards us, not through spells but through force, since the thoughts and minds of women are mysterious.⁵⁵⁹ First Franta, the robot that looked just like a skunk, booted up the very best computer on the Tolma [Britons call it a 'computer', but the Danaans call it a 'hypologistes'], Franta was connected to this computer by a radiophone, it was the leader of all the robots and primary system on our black ship. Which is why everyone called it 'Tsar',⁵⁶⁰ and our translator Franta was connected to it. He booted it up by calling it and spoke to asked it questions with words

⁵⁵⁹ Homily/sententia.

⁵⁶⁰ cf. Astr. 5.343.

Τόνδην ὠτρύνειν ρόβοτον· πυκὰ γὰρ φρεσὶν εἶδεν (340)
 τεχνικὰ πρήγματα πάντα τὰ γὰρ ἦν θαῦμα ἔδεσθαι –
 ὥς ὃδ’ ἐπίσκαζοι εἴ κεν κεκωμένον εἶη
 πρήγμα τι εἰν ποίῳ κομπουτήρ ἢ ρόβοτός τε –
 – καὶ εἰκὼς μεγάλῃ Τόνδης μὲν ἦεν ἀράχνη⁵⁶¹ –
 καὶ τὸν μὲν πέμψαι Ἴβω ρόβοτον ἀκέσθαι. (345)
 Καῖσαρ κομπουτήρ πεπιθὼς πέμψεν ἄπο Τόνδην
 Ἴβω τὸν ρόβοτον κεκακωμένον εὖ ἀκέεσθαι.
 Ἦμος Τόνδα μέγαν Ἴβω μὲν ἀκήσατο δεῖνον
 τῷ νηῦς ἡμετέρῃ τῇ *Τόλμα* τὸ οὖνομ’ ἔεσκεν
 ἔπτατο ἐκ πεδίου ζητεῖν ἡμᾶς μεμανυῖα. (350)
 Ἡὔρον μὲν μέγα ἄστρῳ γυναικῶν κερκοφορεύτων
 ἐχθράων· ἡὔρον καὶ ἀγῶνα καὶ ἄμμ’ ἐν ἄστει
 Νῆα δ’ ἐπεὶ ἐρύσαντες ἐνὶ σταδίου ἐσάωσαν
 καὶ εἶλον κοράμην ἄλλας πισύρας τε γυναῖκας
 πρήγματα δ’ ἐξετάσαι καὶ τὰς ἔχεμεν μὲν ὀμήρους (355)
 (*οὕτως ἐν μέλλῳ φρόνιμοι ρόβοτοί τοι ἔσσονται!*)
 καὶ περὶ τῶν λοιπῶν τά γε σύνκυρσεν⁵⁶² μετὰ ταῦτα
 τί πρῶτον τί δ’ ἔπειτα τί δ’ ὑστάτιον καταλέξω;

⁵⁶¹ cf. *Astr.* 24.109 for a more detailed description of Tonda’s arachnid body.

⁵⁶² = κυρέω (?)

to boot up the robot Tonda, for he was well acquainted with complicated things (all the kinds of technical things which are a marvel to behold) – so that he could repair anything on the ship if it were to break, whether it was a computer or a robot – Tonda also resembled a large spider – and sent him to fix the robot Ivo. The computer Tsar obeyed and sent back Tonda to repair the broken robot Ivo. When the skilful Tonda had fixed the great Ivo, then our ship that had the name ‘Tolma’ flew up from the ground, attempting to search for us. It came across the great city of the hostile tail-bearing women, then found the contest area in the city, as well as us. And then they saved us by mooring the ship in the stadium, and they captured the queen and the other four women, interrogated them about their doings and we took them as hostages (robots will have this kind of mind in the future!), and about the rest of the things that happened afterwards, what should I narrate first, what next, and what at the end?⁵⁶³

⁵⁶³ Common epic trope of trying to create the impression of improvised performance (*festinatio*).

Τήνδε κόρην κοράμην μὲν ἐζήτησάν τε καὶ ἄλλας
 τὰς πίσυρας κοῦρας τὰς σὺν κοράμῃ καὶ ἔνεγκαν (360)
 μάστιγι πληῖξαν πάσας μάζους τε πυγὰς τε
 αὐτογόνων ἀνδρῶν βασιλεὺς καὶ τοῖ σὺν ἐεῖο
 ἐννέα ἀθληταί τοι τὴν κλίμακην ἐπίβησαν
 οἷά γε τοῖσί περ ἔσκε θέμις τοῖς κερκοφόροισιν
 ἀνδράσι ἢ γυναιξὶν ἕως ἐόρακα καὶ αὐτὸς (365)
 ὥς τοι ἀλγόφιλοι ἦσαν πάντες δέ τε πᾶσαι.
 Τῶν ἔνεκεν αἰὲν πόλεμός τις ἔην μετὰ τούτων
 ἀνδρῶν καὶ μετὰ θηλείων καὶ ἄλλα τὰ λοιπά
 οἷ γε τεθηριοωόμενοι φῶτές τε γυναῖκες
 – καὶ ἄνδρες ἄγαμοί περ κερκοφόροι ἐτέκοντο (370)
 ἐξῷ λεσβιακαὶ κοῦραι πλάνην ἀνάβησαν
 ἀλλ' ἦθός περ ἔχον οὐρὰς πᾶσιν ἀποκόψαι
 οὔατα συντέμνειν μικροῖς νηληϊΐ χαλύβδῳ.
 Οὕτως κερκοφόροι οἱ φῶτες οὐκ ἐφάνεσκον
 ἀλλ' ἴδιον φύλον ἦσαν τῆς κερκοφόρησιν – (375)
 Πάντα τὰδ' ἐξέτασαν βασιλῆος ἄνδρες ἀγαννοὶ
 τούτων θηλείων καὶ ἦν μέγα θαῦμα ἄκουειν
 ἀλλά γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα.

They examined the queen and the other four girls whom they had taken along with the queen, and beat them all on their breasts and bottoms with whips. The king of the local men and the nine athletes that were with him also climbed the ladder, just as was the custom for those tail-bearing men and women,⁵⁶⁴ just as I had observed, since all the men and all the women were sadomasochists. Which is why there was always some kind of war going on amongst these men and amongst the women, and the other things in addition, including the beastly men and women – and the unmarried men were born with tails since when the lesbian girls invaded their planet, but had the custom of cutting off all their tails, and trimming the ears of the young with pitiless steel. And so the men didn't seem to have tails, but were really the same tribe as the tail-bearing women – The king's noble men had learnt all this by interrogating the women and it was a great wonder to hear, but our translator Franta translated everything for us.

⁵⁶⁴ This clause is obscure.

Αἱ μὲν τοῖς εἶπαν πάντων λοιπῶν περὶ φωτῶν
καὶ περὶ θηλείων τὰς τείχεσιν ἀρπάξαν πρὶν (380)
καὶ τῶν αἰτίων ἔνεκεν τῶν πάντα γέγοντο.
Αἱ μὲν θήλειαι βασιλείης κερκογυναῖκες
εἰν ἀρχῇ δ' ἦσαν ὡς τὰς περ ἀφικόμεθ' ἄμμες
πρῶτον μοῦνοι ἐόντες ἀτὰρ νῦν σὺν βασιλῇ
ἡγεμονευόμεναι ἐθέλουσαι ἀνδράσι πᾶσιν (385)
ἀλλὰ περ ἀνδροφίλοι ἦως τὰ γε πάντα ἔλεξα.
Ψευδόκυνας δ' εἶχον τοὶ δυσγενέες ἔσαν ἄνδρες
καὶ τοὺς αὐταὶ ἔχον ὡς θρέμματα⁵⁶⁵ εἵνεκα χάρμης
τέρψεος ἢ λάγνοιο ἐπεὶ κρατέειν χάρις ἔσκε
Ἀλλὰ βάδην τε βάδην γε πάλιν τετύκοντο γυναῖκες (390)
λεσβιακαὶ ταὶ καὶ στυγέοντο τὰ γ' ἄρσενά πάντα
ἄνδρας καὶ θῦρας τόδε σφιν κῆρ εἶσατο εἶναι.
Ταὶ δὲ πόλιν προτέρην λελίσκουσαι ἄστὺ τέτευχαν
ἄλλον τῶν ιδίων μετὰ γ' οὔρεα ὑψικάρῃνα
τὰς οὐ τις πρῆξις ὑπάγειν ποσὶν ἢ ὄχεσφιν (395)
ἀλλὰ γε θήλειαι πτερύγους δαμάσαντο δράκοντας
καὶ τοῖς εἴωθαν φέρεμεν μετὰ οὔρεα μακρὰ.

⁵⁶⁵ A *thremma* is also a term for a domestic slave; also, the keeping of humans as pets may remind the reader of the Roman *puer delicatus*, a slave boy kept as a pet, cf. Statius *Silvae* 2.1, 4, 5, & 6.; a human zoo is also a common sci-fi trope, cf. Star Trek TOS pilot episode, “*The Cage*”.

They told them about all the rest of the men and about the women that they'd previously captured on the walls, and about the causes which were the reason for everything happening. The queen's tailed women were in the beginning like those women that we came to. First we were alone, but now we're accompanied by a king, because these women wanted to be ruled by all men, since they're man-lovers as I have described in detail. And they kept fake-dogs that were degenerate men, and kept them like pets for their enjoyment, pleasure, and lust, since it was a delight to rule over them. But gradually, little-by-little, lesbian women were being produced again who also abhorred all things masculine, including men and beasts, and death seemed to be theirs. Then, once they'd abandoned their previous city, they founded another city for themselves amongst the lofty-peaked mountains that neither foot nor carriage had any way of ascending, but the women tamed winged dragons instead and they became used to carrying them amongst the tall mountains.

Τῶν μὲν ψευδόκυνάς τοι δυσγενέες ἔσαν ἄνδρες
 τρέψαν τῆς ἔνεκεν παιγνίης οὐδ' ἐφίλησαν
 ἀνδράσι ἢ θηρέσσι τισὶν φιλότῃ μιγῆναι (400)
 ἀλλὰ γε ἀλλήλας ἐφιλοῦν ὥς λεσβιακαὶ γάρ.

Ἐκ τῶν ψευδοκυνῶν μὲν ἔτευξαν αἰσχυρὰ πέλωρα
 ὥς ἐν ἀγῶνι κυσὶν κρατεροῖσιν ἴφι μάχεσθαι
 ἥως εἰν γαίῃ σὺν ταῦροις ἄνδρες Ἰβηρες⁵⁶⁶
 (ἄλλους ψευδόκυνας εἶχον ὥς σπερμοδοτῆρας). (405)

Τὰς μὲν ἀνδροφίλας κούρας συχνῶς ἀνάβησαν
 κούρας ἀρπᾶξαι ἔνεκέν τε ποιῆσαι ἀκοίτεις.⁵⁶⁷
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ εἶσαν φῶτας σὺν τῇσιν ἐόντας
 ἄρσενα ἀνθρώπων εἶλον καὶ ἄμμε πόλινδε
 παντοίοισι τρόποις βασανίζειν ὥς ἐθέλοιεν (410)

καὶ τοῖς ψευδοκύνεσσι πέλωροις ἴφι μάχεσθαι
 εἰν αὐτῶν σταδίῳ· ἐχθίστους ἄνδρας ἔχουσιν
 ὥς μὲν φαλλοφόρους καὶ αὐτῶν γνώματ' ἔχουσας.
 Ἀλλ' ἡμῖν ρόβοτοι μὲν ἄμυναν νηλεὲς ἡμαρ.⁵⁶⁸
 Εἰς τέλος τί δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα περὶ ταύτων καταλέξω; (415)
 Λέσβαι κερκοφόραι τὰς ἀνδροφίλας ἀπόλυσαν
 καὶ φῶτας δ' ἐτάρους τε βασιλείης δι' ἀμοιβὴν
 καὶ ἐτέρων κούρων τὰς εἵλομεν ὥστε ὀμήρους

⁵⁶⁶ i.e., Spanish style bullfighting.

⁵⁶⁷ = ἀκοίτης.

⁵⁶⁸ cf. Cunliffe Homer s.v. ἡμαρ 4.g, e.g., *Iliad* 11.484, 11.588, 13.514, 15.375, 17.511, 17.615, 21.57, *Odyssey* 8.525, 9.17.

They bred for themselves faked-dogs that were degenerate men for the sake of their entertainment, they did not at all desire to mingle in love with men or beasts, but they desired one another since they were lesbians. They produced ugly monsters from these fake-dogs, so that they could fight for power in the contest area with stronger dogs, just as the Iberians do on earth with bulls (they kept other fake-dogs as sperm donors). And they often made raids on the man-loving girls, for the sake of kidnapping the girls and making them their wives. But when they saw that there were men with them, they took the male humans and us to their city to torture us in all the kinds of ways that they wanted, and to fight for power with the monstrous fake-dogs in their own stadium. They consider men their enemies, since they have penises and minds like their own. But our robots warded off the day of pitiless fate. Finally, what next should I describe about these things? The lesbian tail-bearers released the man-lovers as well as the men and my companions in exchange for their queen and her companions that we had taken as hostages.

- καὶ δύναιν δέξαντο γυναικῶν ἀνδροφιλῶν
 ὡς τῆσιν ἔσκον νῦν ὅπλ' ὀλοώτατα τέχνη (420)
 καὶ τε ὑπερχεσίην θῆκαν μάλα περ ἀνέκουσαι⁵⁶⁹
 πάντας κακτάμεναι δητοὺς σαύρους περυγῶτας
 ὡς μὴ τοῖσιν ὑπὲρ ὄρεα σκιοέντα βάλεσθαι
 κούρης ἀνδροφίλοισι μόρον καὶ κῆρα φέρουσαι.
 Καὶ τὰς ἀνδροφίλας φῶτες δ' ἐποίησαν ἀκοίτες. (425)
 Οὕτως μῆνα ὅλον (*μέτροιο ἐπιχθονίοιο*)
 νυμφές ἐόρταζόν τ' ἐσθλὰς δαίνυντό τε δαΐτας.
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς εἶλεν κούρην βασιλείην.
 τῷ μὲν οὔνομ' ἔεσκε τὸ πρὶν τό γε ἐρμήνευσεν
 Φράντα μεταφρήζων ἡμῖν ὡς *Μισογυνήτην* (430)
 ἀλλὰ γε ἀλλάσσησέ⁵⁷⁰ τε κέκλετο *Φιλογυνήτης*.
 Αὐτὴ ἡ κοράμη δ' ὀνομαστὴ *Ἀνδροδάμεια*
 τὴν μεταμείβετο⁵⁷¹ κλῆσιν *Υπανδρείη* τ' ὄνομ' ἔσχεν
 καὶ ἄλλοι τ' ἄλλαι πάντες μὲν ὅμοια ποίησαν.
 Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐμοὶ μένεμεν πλανήτη ἦνδανε θυμῷ (435)
 ὡς βασιλείην εἶχεν ἄναξ ἀγάμων ποτὲ ἀνδρῶν
 τὴν μὲν ἐγὼ πρῶτος λογικὸς φῶς ὡς ἐπίβησα.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα μοι δέον ἔσκε γυναικῶν κερκοφορέυτων
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἔσαν πᾶσαι καταπύγονες ὄξυθυμοῦσαι
 τῷ τούτων ἔκαμον καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι. (440)

⁵⁶⁹ = ἀεκούσιος.

⁵⁷⁰ ἀλλάσσησέ is difficult to make out from the handwriting (it comes from the verb ἀλλάσσω).

⁵⁷¹ n.b. all the verbs for exchange and transformation here, including translation (ἐρμήνευσεν 429, μεταφρήζων 430, ἀλλάσσησέ 431, μεταμείβετο 433), which emphasises the transformation of the king and queen into their antitheses.

Then they received the power of the man-loving women, since they currently had very destructive weapons that were cunningly devised, and they made promises, albeit very unwillingly, that they would kill all their tamed winged lizards, so that they couldn't fly on them over the thickly wooded mountains, bringing doom and death to man-loving girls. And the men made these man-lovers their wives. And so, for a whole month (according to the Earthly standard) they celebrated weddings and dined on excellent feasts. And the king even took the queen as his wife.⁵⁷² He previously had a name that our translator Franta had translated for us as 'Misogynetes', but changed it and is now called 'Philogynetes'.⁵⁷³ And the queen that was called 'Androdameia' exchanged it and took the name 'Hypantria',⁵⁷⁴ and all the other men and women did the same. But it didn't please my heart to stay on this planet, since the king of the formerly unmarried men had the queen as his wife, whom I, an intellectual fellow, had 'boarded' first. But I had no need for the tail-bearing women, since they were all perverted and quick to anger, which is why my trusty companions also tired of them.

⁵⁷² Αἰπέω doesn't usually mean 'to take as a wife', we would expect a form of ἄγω instead.

⁵⁷³ From the name 'woman hater' to 'woman lover'.

⁵⁷⁴ From the name 'tamer of men', to 'under men's power'.

Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ θαλερῶν φθίθη μὴν νυμφειάων
 τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ Φιλογυνήτην βασιλῆα προσηύδων
 «Τοῦτό γε μοι βασιλεῦ ὑπισχέισω ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
 ὥς μὲν μοι πρόφρων χερσὶν τε τέχνησιν ἀλέξουσιν
 Μανδὺν φῶρα λάβειν μαὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν (445)
 εἴ κεν ἐγὼν ὀπάσαιμι τείν τ' ἄλλοις τε γυναικάς.
 Ταῦτα δ' ἐγὼ μὲν πρῆξα σὺ καὶ σχέο σὸν σύνθημα.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην ὁ με δ' αὖτις ἀμείβετο κοίραμος ἀνδρῶν.
 «Οὐδὲ τί τοι ὦ ξεῖνε ἐμὸν σύνθημα τελέσω
 νήπιε· οὐ γάρ τοι δύναμις κρατέειν μέ πέρ ἐστι. (450)
 Τὰς κούρας γ' ἔχομεν φῶτες· ἄλλων δ' ὀλιγωρῶ.
 Οὐδὲ με καὶ αὐτὸν στήθεσσιν θυμὸς ἀνώγει
 ἀστροπορευέμεναι βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 πλεῖν ὥς εἰν εὐνῆς ῥέξαι κλυτὰ ἔργα ἐρώτων.
 Πόρρῳ καὶ ἐχθρὸς μὲν ἐμοὶ σὺ ξεῖνε τυχήσας (455)
 ὥς δέ με ποιήσας κούρην κοράμην μετέχεσθαι
 (ἄμφω περ ἕτεραιν τρῶγλαιν· φαῦλον τὸ τοι ἔργον)
 σύν σευ ἤματι τῷ, τῷ εἵλομεν ἄστῳ γυναικῶν.
 Τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ τοι ὁμοσά ῥ' ἄλεξιν οὐκετὶ δοῦναι.
 Ἀλλ' ἴθι μή μ' ἐρέθιζε σαώτερος ὥς κε νέηαι.» (460)
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς ἐμὲ εἴλε χόλος θράσυμον κῆρ.

But when the period of fresh marriages had passed, then I addressed king Philogynetes:

“You made me this promised, king, in your own home, that you would willingly lend me your hand and cunning to catch the thief Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe if I were to give you and the rest wives.⁵⁷⁵ Well, I have done these things, and you should keep your word.”

So I spoke, and this lord of men told me this in reply:

“O alien, I won’t do what I promised you, fool. Since you have no power to force me. We men have the girls, and I find nothing else remotely important. And the heart in my chest doesn’t urge me to sail through the depths of the empty universe journeying amongst the stars, but rather to perform glorious erotic deeds in bed. Henceforth you, alien, are my enemy, since you made me share the queen with you (both of us in two separate holes, a worthless deed) on that day when we seized the women’s city. I swore at that time that I would not give you any help. But go, don’t anger me, so that you may leave more safely.”

So the king spoke, and bitter anger seized my courageous heart.

⁵⁷⁵ cf. *Astr.* 11.109-122.

καὶ καταράόμενος ἔπεα πρεποέοντα προσήδων·
 «Τέθναθι ὦ βασιλεῦ πάντων δολερώτατε φωτῶν
 πόρνας πορνέων ἡμος ψυχὴν τορεθήσεις⁵⁷⁶
 σπέρματι δυσώδει· τάδ' ἄνανδρον ἄνδρ' ἐπέοικεν. (465)
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτὸς πλοίαρχος σὺν ἐτάροισιν
 βῆμεν ἴμεν κτᾶσθαι κλέος ἄσβεστόν τε καλόν τε.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην τε λίπον τὸν ἀνήνορα φῶτα ἄνακτα
 – αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα
 καὶ ἐτάρους καλέσας ὥτρυνον ἀστροπορεύειν (470)
 οἳ δ' αἶψ' εἵσβαινον πλοῖον κοσμοῦ εὖτυκτον.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἔπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες.

⁵⁷⁶ = τορέω.

And calling down curses I addressed him in winged words:

“Die now, o king, most treacherous of all men, and may your soul be pierced by your foul-smelling semen since you have fornicated with whores. This is what suits an unmanly man. But my companions and I, the ship’s captain, shall go win unquenchable and beautiful glory.”

So I spoke, and the unmanly king left – but my translator Franta translated the words and once he’d called my companions, he encouraged them to journey amongst the stars, and they again embarked on the well-built starship. The rocket immediately propelled the beautifully constructed ship, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving behind the alien planet.

Book N

[Τὰ περὶ ποικίλων ζώων ἐν πλανήτησιν]

Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν τὸ φίλον ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ
 Πορνογυνῆτι ἄνακτι κότον φρεσὶ ὀξὺ φέροντες
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 οἰοπόλοι μοῦνοι· οὐδ' ἄλλος φαίνετο πλάνης
 ἀλλὰ μέλαν μέγα χάσμα καὶ ἀστέρα σιγαλόεντα. (5)
 Ἡέλιον ξεῖνον μετ' ἀφικόμεθ' ἡὲ περισσὸν
 ξεῖνοι πλανῆται γε περιστροφέοντο δι' αὐτόν.
 Ἔνθα δὲ παμπολέας ἴδμεν φύσεές τε τόπους τε
 θαύματα εἰσοράαν καὶ θαύματα πάντα δ' ἐνίσπειν.
 Πλανήτην μὲν πρῶτον ἀφικόμεθ', ὃ τοι ἔναιον (10)
 ξεῖναι οὐσίαι λάσσαι μάλα ἡύτε θῆρες
 καὶ τρίποδες πᾶσαι τε προβοσκίδας ὡπὶ ἔχουσαι
 ὅσσε δὲ αὐτῶν ὡς γλαυξὶν ἢ βατράχοισιν.⁵⁷⁷
 πολὺ δ' ἀνεικέλεια φύσεες ἦσαν ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
 ἀλλὰ τε γνῶριμαι ἦσαν ἕως χθόνιοι βροτοὶ ἄνδρες (15)
 αὐδὴν αὐτογόνην περ ἔχουσαι ἡὲ νόον τε
 Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων δύνατ' εὖ μεταθεῖναι.

⁵⁷⁷ A reference to frogs triggers possible intertexts with (a) the *Batrachomyomachia* (which the first line of the first book of the *Astronautilia* mirrors, and which Křesadlo published a Czech translation of as student), and (b) Aristophanes' *Frogs*.

Book 13

[The events concerning the various creatures on planets]

We sailed from there with trouble in our hearts, bearing a sharp grudge in our minds against that lecherous king, and seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe, wandering all alone. No other planet appeared, apart from the great big abyss and the glittering stars. And then we arrived at a strange and unusual sun, and there were alien planets orbiting around it. There we saw many kinds of creatures and places, wonders to behold and all wonders to describe. On the first planet we came to lived alien beings, very shaggy like animals, and all three-legged, and had proboscises on their faces, and their eyes were like those that belong to owls and frogs. The creatures on this planet were very unsightly, but they were intelligent like mortal Earthly men and possessed their own language and way of thinking; our universal-translator Franta was able to translate it well.⁵⁷⁸



⁵⁷⁸ The illustration on the right was published alongside the Czech translation and is Křesadlo's own. There are a few more illustrations in book 13.

Τῆς ἄλλαι ἦσαν φύσεις τιθασοί γ' ἰδὲ Θῆρες
 ὀγκηραὶ μεγάλαι τῆς φύκῃσιν εὐκυῖαι
 ἀλλὰ γε ξηροβίουσαι ἔχουσαι τέτρα ποδία (20)
 καὶ βοτάνην κατέδουσιν ἕως βοῦς μῆλα καὶ αἶγες.
 Ταύτας γὰρ τρίποδες εἶχον φύσεας χερσηδεῖς⁵⁷⁹
 τῶν γάλ' ἀμέλγοντες, τὸ πῖνον καὶ αἶμα κελαινὸν
 ἦσι προβοσκίδεσσι τριπαόντες χρῶα θηρῶν.
 Καὶ θῆρας γε σέβον, φάσκον σφας δαίμονας⁵⁸⁰ εἶναι (25)
 καὶ ἰδὲ δωτῆρας βιότου διαιωνίοιο.
 Εἴ κέν τις θηρῶν πίνη γάλα ἢ καὶ αἶμα
 σχήσει τὴν ζωὴν ζαιώνιον ὥς ἐτεθνήκει.
 Ἡμᾶς οἱ τρίποδες μὲν ἄνωγον αἶμα πιέσθαι
 ἄμμι δέ τ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν ἐξαῦτις ἐχθροὶ ἔφυσαν (30)
 καὶ ἔθελόν τε βιάζεσθαι ζωὴν τάχα δοῦναι
 τὴν αἰωινήν, ἐπεὶ ἄμμι τὸ φέρτερον εἶη
 καὶ δόρα παρήγον καὶ ἀκόντιζον κατὰ ἡμᾶς.
 Παύρων κακταμένων φείσοισιν ἡμετέροισιν
 πλοῖον εἰσβαίνοντες ἐς οὐρανὸν ἐπτάμεθ' αὖτις. (35)
 Ἐνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 τοὺς τρίποδας θαυμάζοντες ὅσῃν δέ τε τούτων.

⁵⁷⁹ = χειροήθης.

⁵⁸⁰ The gods of classical theism don't *appear* in the *Astronautilia*, but it isn't fair to say there are **no** gods in the epic, instead, we get alien gods such as these tripodal seals.

Along with them, there were other beings that were domestic animals, swollen and huge like seals, but also lived on land and had four legs, and ate grass like cows, sheep, and goats. For they kept these three-legged creatures as domestic animals, milking their milk, which they would drink, along with their black blood, piercing the skin of the beasts with their proboscises. They even worship these animals, and say that they are divinities and givers of everlasting life. If anyone should drink the milk or even blood of these beasts, then he would have everlasting life when he dies. The three-legged creatures ordered us to drink their blood, but when we didn't want it, they immediately became hostile and wanted to forcibly give us eternal life as soon as possible, since it would be better for us, and so they took out their spears and hurled them down upon us.⁵⁸¹ Then once a few had been slaughtered by our phasers we embarked on our vessel and flew once again into the sky. We sailed from there through the depths of the empty cosmos, amazed at the three-legged creatures and their method of worship.

⁵⁸¹ Forcibly trying to violently impose an ideology/religion on people has clear parallels to what Křesadlo must have thought about the USSR imposing communism on its constituent members and beyond.

Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 ψυχρὸν σφόδρα ἐόντα ἕως Ἀνταρκτίδα γαῖαν
 ὧ μὲν οὐσίαι φύσεες ἦδ' ὄντα ἔναιον⁵⁸² (40)
 ὄμμασι παμπόλλοισι πεπαρμένα καὶ ἀρарόντα
 τῷ μὲν ἀριστότερόν γε' τι ὄν, τῷ πλείονα εἶο
 ὄμματα· τῷ γὰρ ἀριστότερον, τῷ πλείονα εἶδεν.⁵⁸³
 Οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ δεκάδας ὄψων μὲν ἔχοντο,
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἀριστοτέροι ἐκατοστέας αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα (45)
 τῶν πολὺ ἀκροτάτων μυριοὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἔεσκον
 ἀλλ' ἐνὶ τῷ πλάνῃ οὐ μὲν μένεμεν πολὺ δηρὸν
 πολλὰ γε ψυχρὸς ἔην· τόδε φαίνεται' ἄνευ ἀπορίης,
 ὥς ἐν τῷ πλάνῃ μῆλον ζῆν οὐχὶ δύναίτο
 μὴ πρόβατον νόμιμον, μὴ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν. (50)
 Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 θαύματα τῆς φύσεως θαυμάζοντες κατὰ θυμόν.
 Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 [Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν]
 ὃς δέ τ' ἐρήμος ἔην, ἐν τῷ μὲν οὐδὲ τι φῦτο (55)
 ἢ δρυὶς ἢ θάμνος ἢ καὶ τι φυτόν τε πόη τις
 ἀλλ' ἀκταί τε πάγοι χαλεπαί, λισσαὶ δέ τε πέτραι.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² This verse is a little obscure, I'm not sure how to fit ἦδ' ὄντα into my translation.

⁵⁸³ This could also work as a homily/sententia in a USSR setting, since the higher up in the regime you become, then the more you can 'see' via surveillance. I had similar ideas about the sheep who watches the universe being a metaphor for the USSR; this alien reminds me of the mythical figure *Argus Panoptes*, 'all-seeing *Argus*', who was charged with keeping guard over Io/Europa (cf. Moschus *Europa* 55-62, Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 1.46-59, 3.268-272, 13.25-27, 31.226, Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.625-639, Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 2.23); n.b., **surveillance** and **spectacle** are running themes of the *Astronautilia*.

⁵⁸⁴ cf. *Odyssey* 3.293, 5.412, 10.4.

Then after sailing amongst the stars, we arrived at a planet that was exceedingly cold like the Antarctic, on which there lived certain living creatures that were furnished with numerous eyes like studs.

And the more noble that one was, then the more eyes he had, since the more noble one is, the more he sees. And so, the majority had dozens of these



eyes, but the more aristocratic ones had hundreds, moreover, those at the very top of society had thousands of eyes. But we didn't stay on the planet for very long, since it was very cold; and it is apparent without confusion that a sheep would not be able to live on this planet, not an ordinary sheep, not a sheep that watches the universe. We sailed from there through the depths of the empty cosmos, feeling amazement in our minds at the wonders of nature. Then after sailing amongst the stars, we arrived at a planet [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe] that was deserted, on which nothing grew, neither a tree, nor a bush, nor even some plant and grass, but there were rugged, ugly crags, as well as smooth rocks.

- Ἐνθα μὲν ὄντα ἔην ὡς φάσματα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι
 οὐ στερεῇ ὕλῃ· διαφάντα δὲ ἦντ' ὁμίχλῃ⁵⁸⁵
 ἢ νεκύων σκιαὶ ἢ φάσματα ἐκκρούοντα⁵⁸⁶ (60)
 οὐδ' ἔτι εἰς θήλῃ τε καὶ ἄρσενά δαίατο φύσεις
 ἀλλὰ γένος σφισὶν ἄγνωτον ἰδὲ καὶ ξένον ἔσκεν.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα τῆς βρώμης τε ποτήτεος ταί γ' ἐδέοντο
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐνεργεῖν δῶκεν φάος ἡελίοιο
 [πλανήτου ξείνου, οὐχ ἡμετέρῳ ἔοικεν]. (65)
 Ταῦτα δ' ἐγὼν ἔγνων φαντασματικῶν περὶ ὄντων
 ὡς τά γε κοινῶσαι ῥα μετὰ ψυχῶν ἐδύναντο
 ὀρθῶς⁵⁸⁷ ἀλλά γ' ἄτερ ῥήμης τε νοήμασι γυμνοῖς⁵⁸⁸
 καὶ τάδε μ' οὐσίαι κοίνωσαν οὐ τι λέγουσαι·
 «Ὀλβιοὶ εἴμεν, ζεῖνε, ἐπεὶ οὐ γὰρ δέον ἐστὶ (70)
 βρώμης καὶ πόσιος καὶ σκενῶν⁵⁸⁹ οὐδέ τ' αὖ ὕπνου
 οὐ φιλότῃ μιγῆναι, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ὑλικοὶ εἴμεν
 ἀλλὰ ποταόμενοι κοῦφοι καὶ ἄτερ βαρύτητος
 πρῆγματα Μουσάων χαριέστατα πράσσομεν αἰέν.
 Εἴ κεν σὺν ἡμῖν γε μένης πλάνῃ ἐνὶ τούτῳ (75)
 καὶ σε ποιήσωμεν ὡς ἡμᾶς ὄλβιον εἶναι.»
 Ὡς γε φάσαν σκιαὶ οὐπερ τι ἔπος γε λέγουσαι

⁵⁸⁵ This hemistich is usually used when Křesadlo describes someone being shot by a phaser.

⁵⁸⁶ i.e., a vision/phandasm whose presence is intended to ward off intruders.

⁵⁸⁷ n.b. the enjambment of ὀρθῶς.

⁵⁸⁸ The direct communication of thoughts doesn't require a translator such as Franta; this is in essence a *purser* method of communication, since there is no risk of mistranslation, hence the idea that these thoughts are 'naked', as opposed to the implied clothedness of the translated word which can conceal or *clothe* the original meaning, cf. *Astr.* 13.81.

⁵⁸⁹ cf. LSJ s.v. σκῆνος II.1, "*the body (as the tabernacle of the soul)*," a fitting description of the physical body if one's a spectral being.

There were ghost-like beings there, a wonder to behold, not made of solid matter, but transparent like a mist, they were either the shades of the dead or repulsive visions.⁵⁹⁰ They don't even attribute qualities to 'male' and 'female', but gender was unknown and alien to them. Nor do they need food and drink, but they get their energy from the light of their sun [this planet's was strange, not like our own]. I learnt these things about the phantom beings, since they are able to communicate directly with the soul, with naked thoughts, not words, and this is how these beings communicated with me without saying anything:

"We are blest, alien, since we have no need for food or drink, nor the physical body, or even sleep, nor mingling in love, since we're immaterial, but flying nimbly without weight as well, we perform the Muses' most delightful deeds forever.⁵⁹¹ If you should stay on this planet with us, then we could make you as blest as we are."⁵⁹²

So the shades spoke without saying any words at all,

⁵⁹⁰ This seems to be a kind of *katabasis*, as opposed to a *nekyia* (which occurred in book 8 with the Grogal prophet); *katabases* often occur around the centre of an epic (book 6 for the *Aeneid* and book 11 for the *Odyssey*).

⁵⁹¹ Presumably this means composing poetry/literature.

⁵⁹² i.e., transforming Oudeis and his crew into shades, presumably by killing them (?)

ἀλλὰ δέ μ' ἀσπαστὸν μὲν οἶσατο αὐτὶ μένεσθαι
 οὐδὲ πότον γε δέοντα ἔλιν οὐ καὶ μὲν ἐδωδὴν
 ἄλλο τε ἢ δέον ὑλικὸν καὶ ἐλεύθερον εἶναι (80)
 μῦνον νοῦν καθαρὸν⁵⁹³ δίχα σώματος ἢ μεριμνῶν.
 Καὶ ἄλλοι ἔταροι ἴσον γὰρ ἔχοντο πόθημα.
 Καὶ τῷ πλανήτῃ πάντες μὲν ὀλοίμεθα φῶτες
 εἰ μὴ τοὺς ῥοβότους πρῶτον μεταθήτορα Φράντην.
 Τοῖσι πᾶσι νόος αὐτὰρ ψυχῆς δέον ἐστί. (85)
 Οὕτως αἰ σκιαὶ τὰς οὐκ εἰλεῖν ἐδύναντο
 καὶ οὕτως ῥόβοτοι θέλγης ἀσκηθέες ἦσαν
 καὶ οἱ ἄμμ' εἶλον, θῆκαν δ' εἰν νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 ἀλλὰ κυβερνήτης ῥόβοτος ποτὶ χάσμα ἔλυνεν
 – οὕτως εἰν μέλλω φρόνιμοι ῥοβοτοὶ τοι ἔσονται – (90)
 Ἄμμι μὲν ἀστροπορεύουσιν γε κατῆλθε θυμὸς
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτοιο μέγα πλέομεν διὰ χάσμα.
 Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ὃ περ ἔναιον
 ξεῖναι οὐσίαι καὶ θαύματα εἰσοράασθαι.
 Τοῦτον πλανήτην μὲν ἐπισκοπέειν δέον ἦεν (95)
 ὥσπερ μήλοισιν γ' ἐπιτήδειος ῥ' ἐφάνεσκεν
 οὐδ' ἄρα τῷ πλάνῃ ἦεν πολυμηκάδα⁵⁹⁴ μῆλα
 ἀλλὰ γε τῷ ναῖον θῆρές τινες ὥστε χίμαιραι⁵⁹⁵
 ξεῖνοι καὶ ἄτοποι, οὐπὼς ὡς μητέρι Γαίῃ.

⁵⁹³ The 'purity' of thought itself is reminiscent of the earlier statement at 13.68 about 'naked thoughts.'

⁵⁹⁴ Křesadlo has written πολυμηκάδα but this seems like a spelling mistake (cf. Herodotus *Histories* 8.20.7).

⁵⁹⁵ A *chimaera* is also the name of a type of hybrid monster (a fire breathing one or a generic name for hybrid monsters); hybridisation is a common feature of sci-fi, and in a classical setting it also embodies generic experimentation. The fact that this is *not* a hybrid creature, but simply a goat, undercuts the reader's expectation for a hybrid.

and the prospect of staying here made me glad: having no need for food or drink and not needing any other material to be free: I'd be pure thought alone, without a body or cares.⁵⁹⁶ And my other companions had the same desire, and we all would have perished on this planet if it weren't for our robots, primarily our translator Franta. They are all capable of reason but lack a soul.⁵⁹⁷ And so the shades weren't able to win them, and so the robots were unaffected by their charms, and instead took us and placed us in our black ship, and then the robotic pilot propelled it into the abyss⁵⁹⁸ – robots will have this kind of mind in the future – Then our minds returned to us as we journeyed amongst the stars, and glad to have escaped death, we sailed through the great abyss. And then we arrived at a planet on which there lived beings that were strange and wonders to behold. We had to inspect this planet, since it seemed like it was well-suited for sheep, but there were no much-bleating sheep, instead there lived on it some animals like goats, strange and unusual, not like on Mother Earth.

⁵⁹⁶ Similar to becoming 'no one' as the name *Oudeis* implies; also remember that the name *Oudeis* is modelled on Odysseus' pseudonym *me tis*, 'no one', which is a pun on *metis*, 'thought', which is what *Oudeis* wants to become here.

⁵⁹⁷ Robots are capable of rational thought, but lack *souls*: the capacities of robots and their wills is interesting to follow across the *Astronautilia*, e.g., 9.139.

⁵⁹⁸ A classical analogue for this would be the episode of the *Odyssey* with the land of the lotus-eaters.

- Τοῖσιν ὀρθοβάτεις ἦσαν οἱ ἄρσενοθηῆρες (100)
 ἀνθρώποις μικροῖς μὲν εἰκότες ἀλλὰ γε τοῖσιν
 κρᾶθ' ὥς αἰγῶν μακροῖς κέρασιν ἀραρόντα.
 Οὗτοι οἱ χίμαροι φρόνιμοι ἦσαν καὶ ἔλεξαν
 ἀλλὰ γε θηλείαι ἦσαν ὥς θῆρες ἄναυδοι
 ὀγκηραὶ μεγάλαι καὶ ἡμεραι ἦσαν ἅπασαι. (105)
 Τῇσιν μὲν χίμαροι φορέοντό περ ἡὔτε ἵπποις
 καὶ τὰς ἐργάζειν τε ποίησαν ποικίλα ἔργα
 ὥς οἱ γηουργοὶ γαίῃ βοῦς ἡμιόνους τε.
 Αἱ μὲν μακραῖγες βοτάνην τρῶγον ἐνὶ ἀγρῷ
 ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ χίμαροι θήλαζον τῶν γάλα αἰγῶν (110)
 καὶ μὲν σχέμεναι ἦθός τε σφισι τάς τοι ἔχεσκεν
 ὥς περ καὶ πρέπεται θήρας φύλλου ἰδίοιο.
 Οὕτως θηλείας κράτεον φῶτες κερατώδεις
 παντὸς ἄτερ πολέμου· τέλεον ναὶ σχῆμα τέτυκτο.
 Τούτων μὲν καὶ ὅμοι ἴδμεν σὺν κερκογυναιξὶν (115)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐκεῖ τέλεον ἔργον φάνε ἐξελίσσεις.⁵⁹⁹
 Τοὺς μὲν σκεψάμενοι χιμάρους αὐτῶν τε χιμαίρας
 ἀλλ' οὐ κοσμοφόρον πρόβατόν γ' εὐρηκότες αἶψα
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμου ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες
 θαύματα τῆς φύσεως θαυμάζοντες κατὰ θυμόν. (120)

⁵⁹⁹ Probably from ἐξελίσσω, probably with the military meaning of 'deploy', i.e., 'deployment'.

On the one hand, the males of the species walked upright, and resembled small humans, but on the other hand, they were complete with long horns on their heads like goats. These goats were wise and could speak, but the females were like beasts that are incapable of speech, all of them were swollen, huge, and tame. The male goats rode them like horses and made them do all kinds of work, just as farmers make tame cows and mules do on Earth. These large goats gnaw on grass in a field, but the male goats suckled on goats' milk, and they had the custom of keeping them, as is customarily what happens with animals of the same species. And so the horned men had power over the women, all without war: yes this way turned out perfectly. We'd seen similar things to this with the tailed women, but here the deployment seemed perfectly done. Having examined the male and female goats, but not finding the sheep who bears the universe, we flew from the land into the cosmos, leaving behind the alien planet, feeling amazement in our minds at the wonders of nature.

Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 ὅς περ ζωοφόρος μὲν οἶσατο τηλόθεν εἶναι,
 ἀλλὰ δέ οἱ ἀῆρ βλαβερός ἔσκεν τε κακός τε
 οὐ πνεύειν ἐπιτήδειος καὶ ζῆν ἐνὶ πλάνῃ.
 Ταῦτα μὲν εἰδόντες θέλομεν ἐλάσαι ἀνὰ χάσμα (125)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν ζῶόν τί γ' ἐλεύσομεν φοιτάζεσθαι
 ἀνδρὶ ἐπιχθονίῳ μὲν εἰκότος ὀρθοβατὲς δέ
 καὶ σκηφάνδρα⁶⁰⁰ ἔχον τε προσωπίδιον ἐνὶ κρατὶ
 ἀντὶ ἀηρείου βλαβεροῦ· τόδε καὶ νέοι ἄνδρες
 «γᾶς» κλήσιν καλέουσιν (130)

τὸ γὰρ φέρεν ἀνδρίον αὐτὸ
 μύκητάς τινας ἐξαῖρον φανερώς διὰ δόρπον
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ θελόμην γινῶναι ζῶον ὅτι δ' εἴη
 καὶ τὸ προσωπίδιον καὶ ἐγὼ τιθεὶς ἐπὶ κρατὶ
 σκαφάνδρον τ' ἀνέδυν ἀλόμην⁶⁰¹ δέ τε νηῦφι χαμάζε
 οὐδ' οἷος ρόβοκοψ Ἴβω μ' ἐφύλασσαν ἀγήνωρ. (135)
 Φράντα ὁ πανταμεταφρήζων ἔπετ' ἀνδροίδῃ
 αὐτὸς ἔχων σκήφος⁶⁰² εἰν σώμαῃ – τοῦτο κάλεσκον
 ἄνηρες βρύθανες «σπεῖς σοῦτ'» ἄλλοι δέ τοι ἄνδρες
 σκηφάνδρον· ἀλλ' οἱ σκηφοσκοῦγκος⁶⁰³ τόδ' ἔεσκεν –
 σύν γε προσωπιδίῳ βλαβερόν ἄπ' ἀῆρα ἀμῦναι (140)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐνὶ σκάφεος κεφαλῇ εἶχεν μεγάφωνα
 τὸν καὶ ἀμπλιόωνα ἐπὶ κλήσιν καλέουσιν
 ἔξω μακρὰ βοᾶν κεκαλυμμένον εἰ στόμ' ἔχοντα.

⁶⁰⁰ cf. *Astr.* 7.92-3; from the modern Greek word for 'diving suit', σκάφανδρο.

⁶⁰¹ = ἄλλομαι (ἡλάμην).

⁶⁰² σκάφος, cognate with σκάφανδρο; I've translated it as 'suit' rather than 'hull'.

⁶⁰³ Σκάφανδρο has the word for 'man' (ἄνθρωπος) in it, so it makes sense that a space suit for a skunk would have the word for skunk in it instead, hence a *skefoskounghkos* or 'skunk suit'.

And then we arrived at a planet after swimming amongst the stars, which seemed from a distance to be capable of sustaining life, but it had a harmful and bad atmosphere, unsuitable for breathing and staying alive on the planet. Seeing this, we wanted to drive back up into the abyss, but we just now gazed upon some living being walking about, he seemed like an Earthly man and walked upright, he also had a scaphander⁶⁰⁴ and a small mask on his head because of the harmful air. And new men call this 'gas',⁶⁰⁵ for this little man carried it, picking up some mushrooms, plainly for his evening meal. But I wanted to find out what kind of living being he was, and so once I had put a little mask on my head, I put on a scaphander and jumped from the ship to the ground, not alone, the courageous robocop Ivo kept guard over me. Franta, my universal translator, followed the android, also having a suit on his body – this is what British men call a 'space suit', but others call it a 'scaphander', and this was his 'skunk suit' – along with a little mask to protect himself from the atmosphere. But he had a megaphone in the head of the suit which is also called an 'amplifier',⁶⁰⁶ so that he could shout loudly outside, even though his mouth was covered.

⁶⁰⁴ i.e., 'space suit', see opposite.

⁶⁰⁵ i.e., a gas mask.

⁶⁰⁶ Obscure, possibly from the Latin verb *amplio*, hence an 'amplifier'.

Οὕτως μὲν ἀραρόντες ἔβημεν πρὸς ξένον ἄνδρα
 τὸν δὲ τρόμος ἔλε γυῖα, θέλεν φυγέμεν ἀπ' ἐμεῖο (145)
 ἀλλὰ γέ μιν Φράντης προσέφη γλώσσησι πολλῇσι
 καὶ τύχε τὴν ὀρθήν· ὃδ' ἀνὴρ μὲν ἀμείβετ' ἔπεσιν.
 Ὡς ἡμεῖς ἔπεσιν μὲν ἀποσταδὰ⁶⁰⁷ πουλυλόγοισιν
 λέσχην λέξαντες μὲν ἀμειβόμεθ' αὐτὶ μένοντες.
 Εἰς τέλος εἰς πλοῖον μὲν ἐγὼ τὸν ἄνδρα κάλησα (150)
 καὶ ὃδ' ὁμοφρονέων ἐπιβήσατο νῆα μέλαιναν.
 Ἐνδον μὲν κατεδῶς σκηφάνδρον ἄμμι φάνεσκε
 οὐδ' ὥς ἄνθρωπος οὔτις περ ἐπιχθόνιος θῆρ
 ῥύγχον ξεῖνον ἔχων – χαλεπὸν ἔπεσιν μὲν ἐνίσπειν
 καὶ χερσὶν πίσυρας χήλας ὥς ψίττακος εἶχεν (155)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐὺ φρόνιμον ἰδὲ καὶ πρόφρον φάνε ζῶον.
 Τόν γε περὶ πλάνου ξεῖνον βροτὸν ἠρώτησα
 τὴν γενεὴν ἰδὲ καὶ λοιπῶν τῶν φαινομένων τά
 ἀῆρος βλαβεροῦ ἄλλων δέ τε συμφορεάων.
 Ἀλλὰ δέ μοι ξεῖνος ἔπεσιν πολὺ πρῆγμα ἐδείκνυ (160)
 καὶ μοι ἀμειβόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα.
 Ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα·
 «Εἰρωτᾷς, ὦ ξεῖνε, μετὴν γενεὴν τε δόμον τε
 καὶ περὶ ἀῆρος βλαβεροῦ ἄλλων δέ τε πάντων.
 Τοι γάρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω· πολὺπικρον πρῆγμά περ ἐστίν. (165)

⁶⁰⁷ cf. *Odyssey* 6.143, 146.

And so, well-furnished, we walked towards the strange man, but a trembling seized his limbs, and he wanted to flee from me, but Franta addressed him in many different languages, and he chanced upon the correct one. And this man gave his answer in a speech. And so, standing apart, we gossiped in many words and made our replies whilst staying in place. In the end, I summoned the man to our ship, and in agreement he embarked on our black ship. Inside, he took of his space suit and did not appear to us like some kind of human or an Earthly animal, since he had a strange snout – difficult to describe in words, and he had talons on his four hands like a parrot, but he seemed quite a rational and kind creature. I asked this alien being about the planet, his race, and about the other phenomena, such as the harmful atmosphere and the other circumstances. But the alien demonstrated many things to me in a speech and addressed his reply to me in winged words. And my translator Franta translated everything:

“O alien, you ask me about my race and home, and about the harmful atmosphere, as well as everything else. So, I shall tell you, even though it is a very painful matter.

- Εἰμὶ δ' ἐγὼ πύματος πάντων τούτῳ ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
ζῶων τῶν φρονίμων· χαλεπὴ ἔλε μοῖρα κραταιή
καὶ τε πόθος μὲν ἀμέτρητον κέρδους κατέπεφνε.⁶⁰⁸
Πρῶτα δ' ἐκεῖ ἔχουμεν ξεινόν τ' ἄτοπον πολίτευμα
ὥς μὲν εἰώθησάν τοι ἐνίσπειν ἄμμι γέροντες. (170)
- Πάντα γάρ ἦν μὲν κοινὰ δὲ δημοτικ' ἀνδράσι πᾶσι
οὐδ' ἄρα τίς τί γ' ἔχειν ἴδιον δέ δύναιτο πολίτης.
Μοῦνοι οἱ κόραμοι ἴδιον δῶ εἶχον ἕκαστος
καὶ ἔτι κτήματα πολλὰ ἕως μὲν ἦθος ἀνάκτων
ἀλλὰ μὲν οὐκ ἰδίην κτήσιν κλήσει καλέοντο (175)
μούνως αὐτοτάτην ~ οὕτις γε διάστασίς ἐστι ~
καὶ φάσκον πάντων καὶ πάντα τὰ κοινὰ ἔχεσθαι
ψευδολογίζοντες ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ εἶχον ἅπαντα
ἀλλ' ἄλλοι πάντες τούτων ὥς δοῦλοι ἔεσκον.
Τοῖσιν κοινοῖσιν φωτέσσιν ἡέ γυναιχίν (180)
οὐ πως ἦνδανε θυμῷ ἀτὰρ οὕτις φάνε πρῆξις
ὥς τούτων κόραμοι φύλακας εἶχον πολιώμονς.⁶⁰⁹
Οὕτως πικροτάτην ζωὴν πᾶς λαός περ εἶχεν.
Ἀλλὰ βάδην τε βάδην μεταμορφήθη φρεσὶ θυμὸς
παμπόλλων ἀνδρῶν παμπόλλων ἡέ γυναιξῶν (185)
καὶ τοῖς ἡγεμονεῦσι ἀπόστασιν αἶψα ἔθηκαν
κάββαλον⁶¹⁰ ἄρχοντας στήριζαν δημοκρατίν.

⁶⁰⁸ = κατὰ + θείνω.

⁶⁰⁹ Bahuvrihi compound formed from πολὺς and probably ὤμός.

⁶¹⁰ = καταβάλλω.

Well, I am the last of all living beings with intelligence on this planet. Since a powerful, harsh fate has taken them, and the desire for immeasurable wealth had also struck them down. But to begin with, we had a strange and unusual form of government here, as the elders were accustomed to tell us. For all ordinary men possessed all things in common, and no citizen was able to possess any private property.⁶¹¹ Each of the rulers alone had a private estate, and much property also, as is the custom of masters, but they didn't call it 'private' property, only 'personal' ~ there's absolutely no difference ~ and they said that everyone also possessed all things in common, a lie of course, since they themselves possessed everything instead, and all the others were like their slaves too.⁶¹² It didn't bring any pleasure at all to these ordinary men and women's minds, but there seemed to be no solution, since their rulers had many cruel guards. And so, the entire populace had a very painful way of life. But gradually, the temperament in the minds of every kind of man and every kind of woman was transformed little-by-little, and they suddenly enacted a revolution against their leaders: they cast down their rulers, and set up a democracy.

⁶¹¹ Social ownership as opposed to private ownership; Křesadlo goes on to describe an authoritarian form of communism.

⁶¹² Křesadlo's opinions on the USSR really shine through here; many of the alien species encountered in book 13 seem to embody different aspects of the USSR, such as enforced ideology, sycophantism, and now hypocrisy.

Ἀλλὰ γε πάντα πάλιν τε καταντικρύς τε τέτευχαν
 οἷα τὰ κοινὰ γ' ἔσαν τὰδ' ἰδιώτησαν ἅπαντα
 ἀνδράσι πιπρήσκοντες,⁶¹³ ὅσοι τοι ἀφνειοὶ ἔησαν (190)
 ὥς καὶ χρήμασι τινέμεναι ὀλίγου⁶¹⁴ περὶ πάντων.
 Τοῦ κακκᾶν ἰδὲ καὶ ὀμίχριν περάαν⁶¹⁵ τε ὁδοῖ
 καὶ τοῦ ἀρῦσαι⁶¹⁶ ὕδωρ ψυχρὸν πίνεμεν δέ τε λοῦσαι.
 Εἰς τέλος αὐτὸν ἀῆρ' ἴδιον πρηκτῆρι πέπαρκαν
 ὥς μὲν πιπράσκειν πάντεσσιν αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα. (195)
 Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦν δυνατὸν πρῆξαι· πάντη ὅδ' ἀῆρ' ἦν
 καὶ πάντες πνευδὸν μιν ἀκηδεῖς αὐτόματοι τε.
 Εἰς τέλος ἀῆρος κεκτημένος ταῦτ' ἐδίκασεν·
 Βεβλαφέναι μὲν ἀῆρα ὅλον ὀλοῶ διὰ καπνῶ
 σκηφάνδρας τε προσωπίδι' αὐτοῖσι πιπράσκειν (200)
 ὥς οὔτις τούτων πλάνη ἔπι βιοφορευτών
 πλεῖν πνεύειν γε δύναίτο ἄτερ τὰ νομίσματα τῖσαι.
 Ἀλλὰ σχῆμα πάλιν κόψεν κεκτημένον ἄνδρα
 πάντας τ' ἄρχοντας, τοὶ τόνδ' ἰδίησαν ἀῆρα
 καπνὸς γὰρ βλαβερὸς καρτερώτερος ὦκα τέτυκτο (205)
 ἢ ὥς σκηφάνδρη καὶ μάσκα δύναντ' ἀπαμῦναι.
 Πάντες τῶ πλάνη βλαβεροῦ καπνοῖο ὄλοντο
 ζῶων τῶν φρονίμων καὶ ἄλλων ἐγγυὲς ἀπάντων.

⁶¹³ = πέρνημι (πιπράσκω), this verb in epic often has the meaning of selling a captive into *slavery*, cf. LSJ s.v. πέρνημι I.1.

⁶¹⁴ This is difficult to translate unless we supply δεῖ after ὀλίγου, as is implied by the Czech translation (‘it is almost necessary’); cf. LSJ s.v. ὀλίγος IV.1, which also states that the expression can be found with δεῖ omitted (citing *Odyssey* 14.37).

⁶¹⁵ A tricolon of articular infinitives, in the genitive to follow περὶ in the previous verse as examples.

⁶¹⁶ Křesadlo has written ἀφῦσαι, but this seems like a spelling mistake.

But in turn, everything became the very opposite, the things that were common all became privately owned, having sold them to men who were rich, so that it was almost necessary to pay for everything with money. Such as for shitting, and pissing, and driving down the road, as well as for drawing cold water for drinking and bathing.⁶¹⁷ In the end, they sold the atmosphere itself as private property to a trader, so that he could sell the act of breathing itself to everyone.⁶¹⁸ But he was unable to do this, since there was air in all places, and everyone breathed it, without care and involuntarily. In the end, they came to this decision on the possession of the atmosphere: the entire atmosphere would be corrupted with deadly smoke, and they would sell them space suits and little masks, so that none of these survivors would be able to breathe anymore on the planet unless they paid the customs. But the plan backfired against the owner, and all the rulers who had privatised the atmosphere, since the harmful smoke was swiftly becoming more powerful than a space suit and mask could defend from. All the intelligent living beings on the planet perished from the harmful smoke, as well as every other being in proximity.

⁶¹⁷ A transformation from authoritarian communism to some Hayekian or Walter Block-ian anarcho-capitalist hellscape (cf. Block, 2016, Mises Institute, <https://youtu.be/b-nE5XChP-M?si=swOwlTnxTENHEegW> [accessed 4/7/2025]).

⁶¹⁸ This is reminiscent of the 2012 film adaptation of Dr Seuss' 1971 book *The Lorax*, in which Aloysius O'Hare sells fresh air to citizens.

- Μοῦνος ἐγὼ πέρι καὶ λιπόμην ἄλλοι ὀλίγοι τε,
οἷγε μεταλλείῳ μὲν ὀρύσσαμεν ἤματα πάντα (210)
καὶ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἀνέδυμεν ἐνὶ πεδίῳ καὶ ἀῆρι
ἤδη καπνὸς ἔην ἀμαλώτερος, ὥστε δυναστὸν
ἦν ζῆν εἰν πλάνη ζώοις φορέουσι σκαφάνδας.
Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς πάντες μὲν ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
κατ' ὀλίγον φθίχθησαν, ἐπεὶ ὀλοὸς κτάνε καπνός. (215)
Μοῦνος ἐγὼ λιπόμην πόματος φύλου ἅπο ζώων
οἷα γὰρ ἐφθάρηται λαιμαγρίης⁶¹⁹ ἰδίησι
καὶ πόθος μὲν ἀμετρήτου κέρδους γε ἔπεφνε.»
Ὡς φάτο θῆρ φρόνιμος, Φράντης μετέθηκε ἅπαντα.
Ἐν πλοίῳ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ (220)
ῥήματα θηωροῦντες,⁶²⁰ ἐπεὶ μάλα κάρτερον ἦεν.⁶²¹
Ὑστερον αὖ πύματον λελιπόντες ἄνερα πλάνη
ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον θαυμάζοντες περὶ πάντων.
Ἐνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν. (225)
Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ὃ τοι ἔναιον
ξεῖναι οὐσίαι χαλεπαὶ ἔπεσιν διαγράψαι⁶²²
αἱ μὲν φοίταον πεδίον πισύρεσσι πόδεσσι
καὶ εἶχον χεῖρας ἢ χήλας ἐξ ἰδέ κρᾶτος
φυούσας⁶²³ ἰδέ καὶ τρία ὄμματα θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι (230)

⁶¹⁹ = λαιμαργία.

⁶²⁰ = θεωρέω, i.e., in a sense being a *spectator* to his words.

⁶²¹ See Zemplerinová & Machacek (2003) for more on privatisation in Czechia (https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230378339_10); the transition from communism to capitalism also embodies the motif of translation in the *Astronautilia*.

⁶²² A dilemma solved by Křesadlo's illustration opposite.

⁶²³ Tmesis of ἐκφύω.

I alone have survived, and there are few others who were digging in the mines, and when we emerged onto the surface and into the atmosphere, since the smoke was already weaker, and so it was possible for creatures to survive on the planet by wearing space suits. But even so, all my trusty companions soon wasted away, since the deadly smoke killed them. I alone survived, the last of my race of beings who had perished by their own personal greed, and their desire for immeasurable wealth struck them."

So the intelligent beast spoke, and Franta translated everything. And then we all silently turned quiet in our vessel, contemplating his words, since they were very powerful. Later, leaving the final man behind on the planet, we flew into the cosmos, feeling amazement at everything. From there we sailed into the depths of the empty universe, seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. And then we came to a planet on which there lived strange beings that are difficult to set out in words, who strut about on the floor with four legs and have either hands or paws, and three eyes grew from their heads: a wonder to behold.



καὶ ἦσαν φύσεις μέν χρώμασι πᾶσι φαεῖναι
 χλωραὶ καὶ κύαναι καὶ ἐρυθραὶ καὶ ἰδέ λευκαὶ
 χρωῖ γε παμπόλλω καὶ χάρμα ἔην ὀράσθαι.
 Ταῦται οὐσίαι οὐκ οἴκους οἰκοδόμησαν
 ἀλλ' ἐν μύκησίν τοι ἔναιον ὀμβριμοφύτοις (235)
 ἐν τοῖς μύκησίν γ' οἰκήματ' ἐοῖς ὀρύσαντο.

Οὐσίαι φρόνιμαι ἦσαν ξεῖναι ἀτοποὶ περ
 καὶ γλώσσην μέν ἔχοντ' ἰδίην λυγρὴν δέ τε φωνήν
 ὥς καὶ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετατίθετο ῥῆμα.
 Οὐδ' οἱ τετράποδες χαλεποὶ ἡμῖν ἐφانوῦντο (240)
 ἀλλὰ γε ξεινοφίλοι καὶ ἡμῖν πρόφρονες ἦσαν
 καὶ γε σέβονθ' ἡμᾶς ὥς δαίμονας οὐρανίονας.

Δεῖξαν καὶ ἡμῖν τινα εἰκόνα ὥς αἰνιγμα
 εἶν μεγάλη πίνακί σφισιν ἀγνὸν εἶχον ἄγαλμα
 ὥς εἶν τῇ οὐτις δύναται φρόνιμόν τι θεᾶσθαι (245)
 ἀλλ' ἦσαν μούνως σπῖλοι τινος κηλῖδές τε
 καὶ φῆσαν ταύτην τὴν εἰκόνα τοῖσι δοθῆναι
 πρῶτα θεῶν μακάρων ἅπο τῶν μέν ἐπουρανίωνων.⁶²⁴

Εἴ κέν τις βλέψη εἶν εἰκόνι τι φρόνιμον φῶς
 τοῦτος φῶς ἔσεται ἀγαθὸς ἢ τε καλὸς τε,⁶²⁵ (250)
 ἀλλ' εἰ φῶς οὐτι βλέψη πίνακι φρόνιμόν περ
 τοῦτον ἀποκτάμεναι πασὶν δέον ἐστὶ πολίταις
 ὥς βλαβερόν τε κακὸν ζωῆς οὐκ ἄξιον ὄντα.

⁶²⁴ cf. *Iliad* 6.129, 6.131, 6.527, *Odyssey* 17.484.

⁶²⁵ = καλοκάγαθός, a classical Athenian concept of gentlemanliness.

And these beings shone brightly in all kinds of colours, such as green and blue and red and white all over their skin, and it was delightful to behold. These beings don't have houses as their homes, but they reside in mighty-grown mushrooms, they carve out their homes in these mushrooms. These beings were intelligent, even though they were strange and unusual, and had their own language and a mournful speaking voice, even so, our translator Franta translated their words. These four-legged creatures didn't seem dangerous to us, but were friendly and kind to us, and they worshipped us like heavenly divinities. And they showed us some puzzlesome image on a large board which was a sacred picture to them, since no one could see anything intelligible on it, but there were only some spots and stains, and they said that this image was given to them in the first place by blest gods that dwelled in the heavens.⁶²⁶ If any man should perceive some meaning in the image, then this man will be good and noble and beautiful; but if a man perceives nothing meaningful on the board, then it is necessary for every citizen to put this man to death, since he'd be a harmful and evil, undeserving of life.

⁶²⁶ Křesadlo's son, Václav Z. J. Pinkava, told me (25/6/2025) that this sacred image is the 1993 'Magic Eye' poster by Nvision Grafix called 'Nature's Majesty', <https://www.vzjp.cz/JK/astro13eagle.jpg>, these images are supposed to produce a 3D holographic effect when viewed correctly (see supplement for a print-out of the image).

- Ἄλλ' ὥς οἱ φῆσαν οὔτις τι βλέβειν ικανὸς ἦν
εἰκόνοσ εἰν πινάκη κταμέναι πάντες γε δέοντο. (255)
Νῦν περὶ τῆς πίνακός γε θέλον ζήτειν τε πύθεσθαι
καὶ ἡμᾶς ἔθελόν γ' εἰρωτᾶν ὥστε θεοὺς περ
οὐρανόθεν καταβάντες – ἐπεὶ νόος ἐστὶ μέγιστος.
Ἡμῖν δερκομένοις οὔτις φρονίμη φάνε μορφή.
Εἰς τέλος ἱητῆρ καὶ τεχνόσοφος δέ τε Βοῦρδα (260)
φροντίν καὶ τι νόημα λάβον πίνακος πέρι ταύτης.
Πρῶτα μὲν ἱητῆρ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξήτησεν⁶²⁷
πολλῶν τετραπόδων ξείνων καὶ εἴλε νόημα
ὥς μὲν τετράποδες πάντες καὶ τυφλοὶ ἔησαν
ὄμματι εἰν μέζω τε δύω ἀγαθῷ περ ἐέστην. (265)
Ἐκ νηὸς κάλεσαν Τόνδην ρόβοτον πολύμητιν
καὶ μιν βλεψαμέναι εἰς εἰκόνα τὴν ἐπίτελλον
ὥς τρισὶν ὀφθαλμοῖς· ὅδε πείθετο Τόνδα ροβώτης
καὶ τοῖσιν δεῖξεν εἰν αὐτοῦ τηλεορώσει⁶²⁸
εἰκόνα τὴν εἶδεν γ' ἥως τρισὶν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν (270)
ὄρνιν μὲν μεγάλην ἥως χθονὶ ὄρνις αἰητός
μακρῆσιν πτερύφεσσι πεταζομένην ἐν ἄῃρι
καὶ δρύα καὶ σπιλάδας ἰδέ καὶ καλιῇ δέ τε τέκνα
τοῖσιν δ' οἰωνὸς φέρειν ἰχθὺν εἰν ὀνύχεσσιν.

⁶²⁷ = ἐξετάζω.

⁶²⁸ A **spectacle** being mediated via television screens is a running *topos* of the *Astronautilia*, cf. note on *Astr.* 7.228, cf. also 6.46, 6.63, 6.331.

But as they told us, no one was capable of seeing anything on the picture-board, so they had to kill everyone. Now they wanted to ask questions about the picture and learn about it, and they wanted to question us about it since we were gods that had descended from the heavens – so we had the mightiest intelligence.⁶²⁹ But no meaningful shape appeared to us when we looked at it. In the end, our doctor and the technologist Burda had a certain thought and idea concerning this board. The doctor first examined the eyes of all the alien quadrupeds and came up with the idea that all the four-legged creatures were blind in their eye, but the two larger ones worked well. He summoned the resourceful robot Tonda from the ship and ordered him to look at the picture as if with three eyes. The robot Tonda obeyed, and displayed to them on his own television the image that he'd see if he had three eyes. It was a mighty bird, like an eagle on Earth, flying in the air with long wings, and there were trees and rocks and even chicks in a nest, and the ominous bird carried a fish in its talons.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁹ Advanced technology equated with divinity, technology = god.

⁶³⁰ In Homer, eagles are often symbolic of Zeus, and birds of prey in general often symbolise Odysseus in omens and similes (e.g., *Odyssey* 16.216-219, 19.535-550, 22.300-306, 24.538; cf. also *Iliad* 8.248-251); n.b., this is also an **ecphrasis** (see notes on *Astr.* 13.231-253), “that’s very sort of postmodern of him [Jan Křesadlo] [...], because he’s describing it as this thing that they couldn’t see because their eyesight had [...] ceased to function through some genetic aberration” (Václav Z. J. Pinkava in conversation with me, 24/6/2025).

Ἔγνωμεν φανερώς κομπουτήρός τινος ἔργον (275)
 πυκνά λογισάμενον τρισὶν ὄμμασι μόνον ὀρᾷσθαι
 καὶ ὥς τις δῶκεν τὴν εἰκόνα τεραπόδεσσι
 δυσγενεὴν τριτάτου τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῖο ἀμῦναι
 ἀλλὰ ταχὺς μὲν ἦν καὶ οὐ δυνατὴ καταλῦσαι
 ἐκκλησὶν διὰ τεχνομένην ὥς περ θέλε τοῦτος· (280)
 Τὸν Τόνδην κτῖσαι ἄλλην τὴν εἰκόν' ἄνωγον
 ἐν τῇ γ' αἰητὸς δυσὶν αὖθ' ὀραατέος εἶη
 ὀφθαλμοῖς εἴ κεν κατόπισθεν βλέψατο ζῶον.
 Σφόδρα λογιζόμενος ῥόβοτος Τόνδης ἐποίησεν.
 Τὴν μὲν γηθόσunoί γε τετάρποδες εἰσορόοντα (285)
 ὥς τοὶ αἰητὸν θεὸν ὑψηλὸν σέβον αὐτοί.
 Ἡμεῖς δ' ἐξείης ἐπιβήσαμεν ἀστεροπλοῖον
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες
(Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν).
 Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες (290)
 ὥς μὲν ἀῆρα ἔχεν καὶ που ζῆν μῆλα δύναντο
 οὗτος ξεινότατος πάντων ἡμῖν ἐφάνεσκεν.
 Ξεῖνον μὲν πεδίον τε λίπος τι κακόν ἐκάλυπεν
 αἰσχρὰ κακωδίη πνεῦεν πλάνην κάτα πάντα.

We could clearly recognise that it was some product of a computer, complicatedly calculated, and could only be seen with three eyes, and that someone had given this image to the quadrupeds in order to ward off the degeneration of their third eye. But it happened quickly and was unable to be solved by aid of the preventative technologies, just as he had desired. I ordered Tonda to produce another image in which the eagle might be visible again with two eyes if a creature should gaze at it from this point onwards. The robot Tonda made it through precise calculations. The four-legged creatures looked upon it with joy, since they worship the eagle as a sublime god.⁶³¹ Then one after another we boarded our star-vessel, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving behind the alien planet (in search of Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe). And then we arrived at a planet after swimming amongst the stars, where there was air and where sheep were able to survive, and this planet seemed to us to be the most alien of all. The planet's surface was strange, and some foul fatty substance covered it, a disgustingly foul odour wafted across the entire planet.

⁶³¹ There's a clear connection between this alien encounter and nostalgia, which makes it open for meta-literary analysis, especially on **New vs. Old** (see note on following page); third eyes in a spiritual sense often symbolise the mind's eye.

Οὐδέ τέ τις βοτάνη ἔσκειν πλάνη ἐνὶ τούτῳ (295)
 ἀλλὰ φῶν ξεῖνοι μῆκοι στερεοὶ χθονὶ ῥάβδοι
 τῷδ' ἐπὶ ἐρχόμενοι κεκαμήκαμεν ἥτε θῆρες
 ὥς μὲν καρτοτέρη χθονίη ἦν ἵς βαρύτητος.
 Θῆρας μὲν ξεῖνους περ ἐλεύσομεν θαῦμα ιδέσθαι
 φθειρέσσιν γαίῃ περ ἐοικότας ἀλλὰ πέλωρα (300)
 τούτων μὲν μέγεθος τῶν πώλων ἴσον ἔεσκειν.
 οἱ μεγάλοι φθειρες ῥύγχοισιν ἐοῖς τρυπάνιζον
 τοῦ πλάνου δάπεδον αἶνιγμα τόδ' ἔσκε θεωρεῖν.
 Εἷς μὲν ἐμῶν ἐτάρων φείσῳ ξεῖνον βάλε θῆρα.
 Βλήμενος ἐξαπίνης διεφύνατο ἡύτ' ὀμίχλῃ (305)
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντον ἔφν τὸ πέλωρ καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκειν.
 Οἱ δ' ἄλλοι φθειρες φανερώς μὲν οὔτι νόησαν
 φαῦλοι καὶ βραδέες καὶ κωφοὶ θῆρες ἔεσκον.
 Ἀλλὰ μὲν ἐκ τρώγλης τὴν φθεῖρ κταμένος τρυπάνισεν
 σφόδρα τε καὶ μαλερῶς (310)
 ἔθορεν μάλα αἶμα κελαινόν.
 Ἥμας εἰσορόωντας ἔλε τρόμος εἰδομένους νῦν
 τοῦτον πλανήτην ζῶν δ' ἔμεναι ἓνα μακρὸν
 οὐ πέτρης ιδέ καὶ γαίης ζωῆς δέ τε σαρκὸς
 καὶ γε φόβος μ' εἶλεν καὶ ἐμοὺς ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
 μὴ πλάνης ζωὸς μαρψείῃ ἥτε φθῆρας. (315)
 Εἷς πλοῖον φύγομεν φοβεροὶ μάλα καὶ τρομέοντες.⁶³²

⁶³² I mentioned earlier (cf. note on *Astr.* 13.179) that the aliens encountered in this chapter each seem to embody different aspects of the USSR, this living alien planet is a form of body politic which could represent the USSR itself; Eastern European postmodernism often represents the USSR as a giant: Vladimir Sorokin, for example, in his 2013 novel (trans. 2022 by Max Lawton) *Telluria*, anthropomorphises the USSR into a giant corpse that the Russians failed to keep from decomposing (p.10-11) (n.b. the connection to Křesadlo's depiction of cryogenic stasis and my essay on cyborg courtesans, e.g., *Astr.* 2.289, 9.112, 11.138). **New vs. Old.**

And there was no grass on this planet at all, but strange rods grew in the ground, long and hard; and traversing around on it, we were worn out like beasts, since its gravitational strength was stronger than Earth's. Then we gazed upon strange animals (wonders to behold) that resembled head-lice from Earth, but monstrous, since the size of these was the same as of horses.⁶³³ These giant lice burrowed into the surface of the planet with their snouts: this was puzzling to watch. One of my companions shot at an alien animal with his phaser. Once hit it immediately became transparent like a mist, and then the monster became invisible and was no more. But the other lice had clearly not realised at all, these beasts were thoughtless, slow, and dumb. But then very black blood spurted extremely violently out of a hole that a louse had made its burrow. Trembling seized us when we saw this, since we now saw that this planet was a single, giant living being, not comprised of rock and earth but rather of living flesh, and the fear that this living planet would squash us like lice seized me and my trusty companions. We fled to our vessel in great fear and trembling.⁶³⁴

⁶³³ This reference to horse-sized insects is reminiscent of Lucian's *True History* 1.13, when in the moon's army there are flea-archers who ride fleas that are as big as twelve elephants; insects in a mock-epic setting also evoke the Pseudo-Virgilian *Culex*.

⁶³⁴ This body politic is interesting since a living planet with head-like features would imply that this planet is essentially a giant decapitated head: quite a revolutionary image when we remember that the head symbolises the ruler, i.e., the *head* of state.

Αὐτίκη πύραυλος ἔλασεν πλοῖον πεδίωφιν
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ζῶν πλάνην λελιπόντες.
 Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ὧ τοι ἔναιον
 ὄμβριμα ὄντα πέλωρα τὰ γὰρ φόβος ἦν ὀράασθαι (320)
 λάσια καὶ κέρασιν κυνόδοις⁶³⁵ χεῖλης⁶³⁶ τ' ἀραρῶτα
 παμπόλλης μορφῆσιν τε χρώμασι θαῦμα ιδέσθαι.
 Ἦμῖν ἐρχομένοις πλάνη τοῖ ἐνάντιον ἦλθον
 ὡς φανερώς ἔθελόντ' ἡμᾶς ιδέειν τε πυθέσθαι.
 Τῶν τεράτων ἔν μὲν ποτ' ἐμέ δράμε χεῖρας ὀρέγνυ (325)
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ φοβερὸς φεῖσπον ἐρύσας παρὰ μηροῦ
 τόδ' ἔθελον κτάμεναι ἀλλὰ προσέφη μ' ἐπέεσσιν
 γλώσση ἡμετέρη· τόδε γὰρ μέγα θαῦμα τέτυκτο·
 «Τίπ' Οὐδείς με θέλεις κτάμεναι φείσῳ πολυπίκρῳ
 παιδείης⁶³⁷ ἔταρον τὸν μὲν γινῶναι δέον ἐστί;
 Εἰμί γ' ἐγὼ τὸ πέλωρ τό γε νυκτί τοι εἶναι εἰώθει
 ἱματιοθήκη θαλάμῳ πατρὸς ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
 τειῶ ὡς παιδὸς καὶ ἡδὺ τὸ δεῖμα ἐτοῖμον.
 ἱματιοθήκη σὺν τοι ἦν νυκτί ἐκάστη
 ἦμος δ' ἡβήσας καὶ τοι θάρσος κίχεν ἀνδρός (335)

⁶³⁵ It's very hard to make out Křesadlo's handwriting here, the Czech translates it has 'with teeth' so I think we might be looking at some odd form of ὀδοῦς, so I've settled on reading it as a form of κυνόδους (should be κυνόδουσιν).

⁶³⁶ = χηλή (should be χηλαῖς).

⁶³⁷ Παιδεία also has the meaning of 'education' and 'erudition', which was an important concept to Křesadlo; his son, Václav Z. J. Pinkava, told me that his father thought that "one of the best reasons really to be educated was you could laugh more often, because you'd get more [...] associations between things that other people wouldn't see" (24/6/2025).

The rocket immediately propelled the vessel from the planet's surface, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the living planet behind. And then we arrived at a planet on which there lived mighty monsters that were fearful to behold, they were shaggy and were furnished with horns, fangs, and claws, in all kinds of shapes and colours (a wonder to behold). They came to meet us as we walked on their planet, since they obviously wanted to see us and learn from us. One of these monsters ran at me with outstretched arms, and then once I'd drawn my phaser from beside my thigh in fear, I wanted to kill it, but it addressed me in a speech in our own language, and so it turned into a great wonder:

“Why, Oudeis, do you want to kill me with your very keen phaser, a companion from childhood whom you must remember? It is I, the monster that was accustomed to stay in your bedroom's closet in your father's house at night when you were a child and your sweet fear was ready at hand.⁶³⁸ I was with you each night in your closet, but when you'd grown up and gained a man's courage,

⁶³⁸ Reminiscent of the Pixar 2001 film *Monsters Inc.* (n.b., Křesadlo's son Jan Pinkava worked at Pixar from 1993 to 2006, and the concept for *Monsters Inc.* was conceived in 1994 (Pallotta 2014, *Business Insider*, <https://www.businessinsider.com/pixar-movies-thanks-to-napkin-sketches-at-lunch-meeting-2014-4> [accessed 5/7/2025]), Pinkava is also credited as a storyboard artist for *Monsters Inc.*, additionally, the monsters in *Monsters Inc.* enter children's bedrooms through their *closets*)

τῆμος ἐγὼν ἔλιπον θάλαμον καὶ εἵματοθήκην
 τούτῳ πλανήτῃ νῦν ναίω σὺν ἐτάροισιν
 ἀλλὰ σε νῦν ἤλθον ἀσπάζεσθαι ἔταρον ὥς.
 Πολλὰς γὰρ νύκτας ἤμεν σὺν ἀλλήλοισιν
 ἱματιοθήκῃ μὲν ἐγὼ σὺ δέ καὶ ἐπὶ εὐνῇ. (340)
 Ἀλλὰ γε νῦν ἤλθες μ' ἰδέμεν μὲν ἐμῇ ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 ἀνὴρ ὥστε μέγας καὶ ἄρχων κοσμοπορευτῶν.
 Τῷ δέ μοι ὡς ἐτάρῳ μέγα χάρμα τε κῦδος ὀπάσσω.
 Ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἴομεν ἐτάροις σὺν ἐμόνδε δόμονδε
 ὥστε παινήσω καὶ τοι κλυτὰ ξείνια δώσω.» (345)
 Ὡς φάτο· καὶ νυν ἐγὼν ἔγνων τό πέλωρ ἐνὶ θήκῃ
 ὡς τόδε ὀφθαλμοῖς ψυχῆς ὀράαν καὶ εἰώθειν
 ἤμασι παιδείης· νοσταλγίῃ λάβε θυμόν
 ἀλλὰ γε φάσματι τῷ ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων
 «Πῶς γὰρ σύ γε φέριστε λαλεῖς καὶ δῶμα πέπαι⁶³⁹ (350)
 φάσμα μόνον περ ἐὼν παιδὸς θυμοῦ τε δόκησις;
 Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ περ ἴοιμι τεὸν εἰς χαλκοβατὲς δῶ
 ὀξέα γινώσκων ὅτ' ὕπαρ οὐκ ἔσσι καὶ αὐτός.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην· τό με δ' αὖτις ἀμείβετο κνώδαλον αἰνόν·

⁶³⁹ = πάομαι.

then I left your bedroom and closet behind, and now I live with my companions on this planet, but now I have come to welcome you as my friend. For we were with one another for many nights: I was in your closet, while you were on the bed. But now you have come to see me in my own country, as a great man and leader of cosmonauts. It gives me great pleasure and glory to be your friend. But come now, let us go with my companions to my home, so that I can make you cheerful and give you famed guest-friendship."

So he spoke, and now I recognised the monster in the closet, as I was accustomed to see him with the eyes of my soul in the days of my childhood. Nostalgia took control over my mind,⁶⁴⁰ and then I addressed the apparition in winged words:

"How are you talking, my dear fellow, and how did you acquire a home when you're simply an apparition and the creation of a child's mind? For I shall not go to your brazen-floored home, since I understand full well that in actual fact you are not even real."

So I spoke, and the terrible brute made his reply to me once more:

⁶⁴⁰ I had linked other sections of book 13 to the concept of nostalgia, but here it is most clearly portrayed (since it literally says *nostalgia*); **New vs. Old.**

«*Νήπιος ἔσσι' Οὐδείς ἢ Μαρξισμόν δεδάηκας* (355)

*ὥς οἶεις τό ὄναρ τε ὕπαρ δίχα διαφέρεσθαι·
μοῦνον γ' ἐστὶ τό ὄν μοῦνον χρόνος ἢ ζακενόν τε
μοῦνον καὶ ὕλη δέ τ' ἐνεργεῖη τε ἔασιν⁶⁴¹
μοῦνον καὶ ψυχὴ σὺν σώματι – μοῦνον ἔπειτα
φάσμα τε καὶ τὸ ὕπαρ* (360)

μοῦνον γὰρ πάντα τά γ' ἐστίν.

*Ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ τεδὸν εὖωλον θυμοῦ ἔτι παιδὸς
καὶ ὄντως ζῶω καὶ μοι στερεὸν τόδε σῶμα.
Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐπεὶ ἔταρον οὐκ ἔγνωσ ὥστε ἐόντα
οὐκ ἄρ' ἐγὼν ἐθέλω πλεῖν ξεινίσαι ἐνὶ οἴκῳ.
Πλοῖαρχος τέτυκες τότε τοι μέγα θυμὸν ἔφυσεν (365)
ἀλλὰ γ' ἐγὼ μοῦνον τὸ πέλωρ τὸ τὰ τέκνα φοβεῖται.
Οὐ γὰρ πλεῖν οἶεις ἔταρόν τοι ἄξιον εἶναι
ὀξέα ὑβρίζων τῷ κακκλάσθῃ φίλον ἦτορ.»*

⁶⁴¹ Note the similarity of items to descriptions of what would cease to exist if the sheep who watches the universe were to die (cf. *Astr.* 1.31, 87, 90, 105, 11.59, 71, 113).

“Either you’re a fool, Oudeis, or you’ve studied up on Marxism, since you think that visions seen while dreaming and visions seen while awake are distinctly separate. Being is one, time and the vacuum of space is one, matter and energy are one, the soul along with the body is one – and since they are one, illusion and reality are what exist, for all things are one.⁶⁴² So, I am also a fancy of your still child-like mind, but I’m also alive and this body of mine is solid. But since you don’t recognise me as your friend, then I don’t want to have you as a guest in my home anymore. Your mind grew large the moment you became a ship’s captain, but I am simply a monster who scares children. So, you don’t think that I am worthy of being your friend by acting intensely arrogant, which has made my dear heart shatter.”



⁶⁴² This is sounding a like Monism; note that this isn’t saying that *nothing* is real, as we would expect if there were Hindu or Buddhist influences (which there could be considering Křesadlo’s novel *Vara Guru* and the fact that Křesadlo says that for four years he was a member of a “pseudo-Indian mystical sect”, Viola literary club 1992 <https://youtu.be/bWm9Bfc9ZGA?si=sn4M4ixkY9NLrrYS> 1:18:30 [accessed 26/6/2025]), but rather that *everything* is real.

Ὡς φάτο καὶ κλαῖον ἀπέβη τό τέρας ἀπὸ θήκης
 ἀλλὰ γε κνώδαλα λοιπὰ ἔποντ' ἀκαχήμενα ἦτορ (370)
 σκανδαλιθέντα ἅπαντα ἐπεὶ ἔταρόν σφ' ἐτίμησα.
 Ἄμμες αὖτε πάλιν ἦμεν καλὴν ποτὶ νῆα
 καὶ εἰσβαίνοντες πλοῖον ἀποχώρησιν τοι
 ἦρξαμεν ἐντύνειν ἔταροι πάντες καὶ ἔγωγε.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν πλοῖον πεδίωφιν (365)
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες.
 Ὡς φύσεως αὐτῆς θαυμάζοντες κατὰ θυμόν.
 Ὡς φύσεως αὐτῆς θαυμάστερον οὐδέν ἔνεστι⁶⁴³.

⁶⁴³ cf. *Astr.* 17.177, homily/*sententia*.

So he spoke and the monster left from the closet in tears, but the rest of the monsters also followed him with troubled hearts, they were all offended since I had dishonoured their companion. We went back to our beautiful ship, and boarding the vessel, all my companions and I began preparing for departure. The rocket immediately propelled the vessel from the planet's surface, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind. From there we sailed, feeling amazement throughout our hearts. Since there is nothing more wonderful than nature itself.

Book Ξ

*[Ἀστροναύτων ἀγορά. Ὁ τῆς ἀναψυχῆσεως πλάνης.
Κύπτον φανλότης καὶ δίδωξις.]*

- Πολλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ πλέομεν γλαφυρὸν δι' ἀπείρονα κόσμον
[Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν]
 πολλοὺς πλανήτας ξείνους ἐοράκαμεν ἄνδρες
 θαύματα τῆς φύσεως τάδε οὐ δύναμαι καταλέξαι
 πολλοὺς κινδύνους γε παθόν καὶ ἐσθλοὶ ἐταῖροι. (5)
 Πέντε διὰ χθονίους πλέομεν φῶτες γ' ἐνιαυτοὺς
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἀλλὰ γε οὔτις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο ζητομένοισιν.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ἔκτος χθονίος ἦρξεν ἐνιαυτὸς
 τῷ καὶ ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θέμενος προσέειπον ἐταίρους. (10)
*«Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων περ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι·
 ζήτησις μῆλου καὶ Μανδύος οὐ τετίλεσθαι.
 Ἡμῖν νῦν καιρὸς περὶ τούτων ἐστὶ θεωρεῖν
 εἰ μὲν ζήτησιν λείπειν Γαίηνδε νέεσθαι
 εἰ δ' ἔτι νῦν μενέειν ἡμὸς μῆλον κεκιχῆναι.* (15)

Book 14

*[The assembly of astronauts. The planet of refreshment.
Kypa's wickedness and pursuit.]*

Afterwards, we often sailed through the hollow, boundless cosmos [seeking Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe], we had seen many alien planets, wonders of nature that I'm unable to describe, me and my fine companions also suffered many dangers. For five Earthly years we sailed in search of Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe, but no solution revealed itself to us in our quest. But when the sixth Earthly year began, then I set up an assembly and addressed my companions:

“Listen to my words, my trusty companions; the search for the sheep and Mandys has not come to an end. Now is the right time for us to consider in relation to these matters whether we should abandon the search and return to Earth, or if we should continue until we catch up with the sheep.

Ἀλλὰ δέ μοι φρονέοντι διχῇ βουλῇ φανετ' εἶναι·
 Εἴ κεν ἄτερ μήλου νοστήσαιμεν ποτὶ γαίην
 ἀσφαλέως ἡμᾶς κόραμοι εἰργμόνδε βάλοιεν
 καὶ σάφα εἰσαίεν γε μένοι κίνδυνός τ' ἀπειλῇ
 Μανδύος⁶⁴⁴ ἢ μήλοιο τό κεν κτάμεναι ὁ δύναιτο (20)
 πάντα τέ ὡς ὀλέσαι κόσμον καὶ κτήματα πάντα.

Εἴ περ μείναιμέν γ' ἔτι μῆλον θηρευόντες
 δείδω μὴ ἔργον τόδε οὐ τετελεσμένον εἶη
 ἀπλῶς καὶ ἀνέδην ὅτ' ἀπείρων κόσμος μέν ἐστι
 τῷ δ' ἀνάριθμαί ἔασι γαλαξῖταί τε καὶ ἄστρα (25)
 ἡέλιοι περὶ τῶν πλανῆται καὶ ἀνάριθμοι
 οὐδ' ἄρα τις πρῆξις εὖρειν ζακενῶ⁶⁴⁵ ἓνα θῆρα
 μούνη μεν τύχη· ἀποφώλιον ἐστὶ νόημα.

Ἀλλ' ἄγε· εἰ οὕτις πρῆξις δόμεναι ἐνὶ Γαίῃ
 καὶ οὕτις εὖρειν μῆλον ζακενοῖο κενοῖο (30)

ἄψ νοστήσαιμεν πλανήτηνδ' ἢ μήνηνδε
 τῇ κρυσταλλόπηκτος ἀνὴρ μάντις δ' ἔτι κεῖται
 ὄφρ' εἴποι ἡμῖν που ζητεῖν φῶτά τε μῆλον
 καὶ τὴν χρουνοφόρην ὕλην γε διάνδιχα κέρσαι
 ὥς πρὶν μάντησεν Γρογαλὸς κρυσταλλοπέπηκτος (35)
 οὐδ' ἄρα τι πλεῖόν γ' ἔθελεν ἡμῖν ἀγορεύειν
 ἥματι τῷ τῷ μιν κατορύζαμεν ἀστερολάβοι.

⁶⁴⁴ Křesadlo has written Μαδύος, a spelling error.

⁶⁴⁵ (δια/ζα).

But as I think about it, a two-part plan has revealed itself to me: if we should return to Earth without the sheep, then our rulers would assuredly throw us in prison, and clearly the danger and threat of Mandys and the sheep would stay apparent, that he could kill everyone and thus destroy the cosmos and all things. But if we continue hunting for the sheep, I fear that this task is impossible in any straightforward and simple way, since the universe is boundless, and in it there are countless galaxies and stars, and countless suns with planets around them; and there is no solution to finding a single animal in the vacuum of space by chance alone, that idea is ludicrous. But come now, if there is now way for us to return to Earth, and no one can find the sheep in the vacuous abyss, then let us go back to the planet and the moon on which the prophet still lies cryogenically frozen so that he can tell us how to search for the man and the sheep, and how to cut the time-bearing material in half, just as the cryogenically frozen Grogal had previously prophesied, but then he didn't want to tell us anything more on the day that we astronomers dug him out.

- Ἀλλὰ δέον νῦν ἐστὶ πάλιν μάντιν κατορῶσαι
 εἴ μὲν τι φρόνιμον πλεῖν εἴπειη Γρογαλὸς φῶς.
 Οὗτος γὰρ λάσιος μάντις πυμάτη ἔτι ἔλπις* (40)
Μανδύος καὶ μήλοιο τόπον εὔρειν καὶ ἀφίκεσθαι.»
*Ὡς ἐφάμην οἱ πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ.
 Τοῖσιν μύθων ἤρξεν ἀνὴρ φαῦλος καὶ ἄπιστος
 τὸν Κύπτην ἔταροι μὲν ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέοντο
 ὃς γὰρ ἄπαξ στάσιν ἤγεν ἀνὴρ μοι νῆϊ μελαίνῃ* (45)
*ἀλλὰ ἐκοσμοβίων ἐτάραξέ τε μῆνιν ἔθελξεν.
 Οὗτος νῦν ἤρξεν μαλερῶς νεῖκεῖν ἐπέσσειν·
 «Νήπιος εἶ Οὐδείς ὡς ἄμμε φῶτας ἀνώγεις
 Μανδὺν ζητέμεναι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ὡς μὲν ἐπαίτελλον κόραμοι εἰν μητέρι Γαίῃ* (50)
*ἀλλὰ γε τοὶ τῆλου ἀπονόσφι καὶ οὔτι ἴσασιν⁶⁴⁶
 οὔδε κολαζέμεναι ἐπεὶ εἰν κόσμῳ πέρ ἐείμεν.
 Ἀλλ' ἄγε ζήτησιν λελίπομεν Μανδύος ἀνδρὸς
 ὡς ἀχρηστοτάτην· οὐ γάρ ἐἴλειν δυνάμεσθα.
 Ναὶ ῥ' ἀνάριθμοι ἔασι γαλαξῖαί τε καὶ ἄστρα* (55)
*ἡέλιοι περὶ τῶν πλανῆται καὶ ἀνάριθμοι
 οὔδ' ἄρα τις πρῆξις εὔρειν ζακενῶ ἕνα θῆρα.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ Μανδὺν κτάμεναι ὅτ' οὔ περ οἶω
 ὡς ὄγε τῇ χρεῖται⁶⁴⁷ τε ποίησε τὸ μῆλον ἄκοιτιν
 πλάνῃ μακροπόδων ἥως ἴδμεν γε καὶ αὐτοί.* (60)

⁶⁴⁶ Again, visibility, surveillance, and spectacle are key themes of the *Astronautilia*.

⁶⁴⁷ It's obscure what form this is, but it seems that it comes from the verb χράομαι.

But now we have to dig the prophet out once again to see if this Grogal fellow tells us something else that makes any sense. For this shaggy prophet is still our final hope to find and come to the place that Mandys and the sheep are.”

So I spoke, and everyone silently became quiet. A careless and untrustworthy man began speaking to them, whom my companions called Kypta, and was the man who once led a mutiny on my black ship, but a cosmobion had shaken him and soothed his anger. Now this man began to insult me violently in a speech:

“You’re a fool, Oudeis, since you are commanding us men to seek Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe, just as the leaders on Mother Earth had ordered, but they are far, far away from you, and see nothing, and they can’t punish us when we’re in space. But come now, let us abandon our quest for this fellow Mandys, since it’s completely futile, for we are unable to catch him. Yes, there are countless galaxies and stars, and countless suns with planets around them, and there is no way for us to find a single animal in the vacuum of space. But I don’t actually think that Mandys will kill the sheep, since he has had sex with her and made this sheep his wife, just as we ourselves had seen on the planet of the kangaroos.

*Ἄλλ' εἴ κεν κτεῖνοι μῆλον Μανδῦς πολύπικρος
 ἔκ γε μελανχολίης ὥς μισόβιός τε τύχοιτο
 καὶ τότε ὀλήσειεν ζακενὸν καὶ ἀπείρονα κόσμουν
 πάντες καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀπολησάμεθα πορευῆται
 οὐδὲ τι πλεῖν πειραζόμενοι οὐδ' εἰδόμενοι τι.* (65)

*Τοῦνεκα οὐ τινος ἄμμι μελήσει οὐ γὰρ εἰσὶν.
 Σχήματι δ' ἀμφοτέρῳ οὐτις μελέτη περ ἔνεστιν.
 Ἄλλ' ἄγε ζήτησιν βλακικὴν νῦν αἶψα λίποιμεν
 νῆα δὲ πέμψαιμεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο.
 Οὐτοπον εἰς πλάνην τῷδ' ὅζοις χορδαὶ ἔασιν* (70)

*βρῦτος ῥεῖ ποταμοῖσί τε πορνεῖ ἕκαστος ἐκάστω
 τούτῳ γὰρ πλάνη ζῶμεν μὲν ἀκηδέα ζωὴν
 Μανδὺν λάθοντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.»*

*Ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐπευφήμησαν ἑταῖροι
 λάθειν ζήτησιν εὐθύνειν τ' ἀστερονῆα* (75)

*Οὐτοπον⁶⁴⁸ εἰς πλάνην τῷδ' ὅζοις χορδαὶ ἔασιν
 βρῦτος ῥεῖ ποταμοῖσί τε πορνεῖ ἕκαστος ἐκάστω.
 Τοῖσι δὲ κερτομέων ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδων·*

⁶⁴⁸ Lit. 'no place', i.e., 'Utopia'.

But if the very bitter Mandys should kill the sheep out of melancholia because he grew to hate life, then he would also destroy the vacuous and boundless universe, and we all would perish ourselves while we were on our way, and not experience anything anymore nor would anything be visible. Which is why we won't feel concern for anything, for we won't exist. And we'll have no concern at all either way. Come on then, let us now abandon our stupid quest at once and send our ship into the depths of the empty universe. But come now, let us now abandon our stupid quest at once, and send our ship into the depths of the empty universe to the planet Utopos, where the branches have sausages, beer flows in rivers,⁶⁴⁹ and each person fornicates with each other; so let us live a careless life on this planet, forgetting Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe."

Then all my other companions shouted in agreement to forget our quest and direct our starship to the planet Utopos, where the branches have sausages, beer flows in rivers, and each person fornicates with each other. And I addressed them in winged words, taunting them:

⁶⁴⁹ An alcoholic river evokes the river of Chian wine that Lucian comes across in the *True Histories* (1.7).

- «Νήπιοί ἐστε φίλοι ὥς Κύπτου πίστιν ἔχεσθε
 τοῦ Οὐτόπου πλάνου πέρι μύθου οὐ φρονέοντες (80)
 οὐνομα τοῦ πλάνου δεῖξαι ὅτι μηδαμη ἔστι.»
 ~ καὶ δέ τε τοῖσιν ἐγὼ τὰ νόήματα ἐρμήνευσα⁶⁵⁰
 Ἀργείων γλώσση μύθων ~ (Τόδε γνῶθ' ἀναγνώστα⁶⁵¹
 ὥς μούνως ἰδιώματι τῷ τόδ' ἔπος νυ γέγραπται
 ἀλλ' ἄλλην γλώσσην ἄμμες σχόμεν ἀστροπορεῖται). (85)
 Ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἔνωρτο γέλως ἐσθλοῖς ἐτάροισιν
 ὥς εἶδον Κύπτην μάλα νήπιον καὶ ἀμαθὴν τε.
 Ὅς δ' ἐρυθραίομενος κάτ' ἄρ' ἔζετο· τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς
 ἀνδρῶν κερτομὴ κρυπτὸς δὲ κότος ἔλε θυμὸν.
 Κύπτην νικήσας ἀνεχον μὲν ἐγὼν ἀγορητὴν· (90)
 «Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων πάντες νῦν ὄφρα τι εἴπω.
 Μοῦνη δ' αἰτίη δοκέει γε πεπνυμένος εἶσαι
 Κύπτης ὥς ἄμ' ἄνωγε πεπαυσέμεναι ἀπὸ πλωτοῦ.
 Πενταετῆς πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 ἄστεροναντηῆρες μάλα γὰρ φθίτο θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ (95)

⁶⁵⁰ ἐρμηνεύω is a technical term for interpretation

⁶⁵¹ cf. note on *Astr.* 7.40, apostrophe to the reader; cf. Butler 2015 *The Ancient Phonograph*; the verb ἀναγινώσκω often means 'recognise, know well', so ἀναγνώστης could be instead translated as 'my recogniser; one who knows me well', which could suggest some sort of literary game.

*“You’re all fools, my friends, since you’ve put your trust in Kypta concerning his speech on the planet Utopos, failing to understand that the name of the planet displays the fact that it does not exist at all.”*⁶⁵²

*~ and I explained to them the concepts, speaking in the language of the Argives ~ (know this, reader, that this epic is currently written only in that language, but we astronauts had another language).*⁶⁵³ *But then unquenchable laughter rose up amongst my fine companions when they saw how much of a foolish idiot Kypta was. And he sat back down after turning red, and was terribly distressed by the men’s taunting, and a hidden grudge seized his mind. Having defeated Kypta, I spoke eloquently:*

“Listen to my words, everyone, what I now have to tell you. Kypta seems to be wise for a single reason, when he ordered us to cease from our drifting. We have sailed as astronauts through the depths of the cosmos for five years, and our courageous hearts are very weary,

⁶⁵² i.e., since the name *Outopos* literally means ‘no place’. The double-entendre of *Outopos* is less obvious when it’s not being used in a Greek-speaking context, since the English pronunciation, for example, could also imply *Eutopos*, ‘good place’.

⁶⁵³ According to the logic of the epic, the *Astronautilia* is a translation by Franta into Homeric Greek. This comment therefore doesn’t seem to be an interjection by the expected narrator, Oudeis, but rather seemingly by Franta. This scene highlights the role of translation in the *Astronautilia*.

- οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ νῦν φημι κακώτερον ἄλλο γένεσθαι
 χάσματος ἄνερα συγχεῖναι καὶ κατερὸν ὄντα
 οὐδὲ τ' ἔπειτ' ἐπέοικε λίπειν προβάτον ζήτησιν
 ὥς τοῖς ἄρχουσιν γ' ὑποδεξαμεθ' ἄνδρες ἀγανοί.
 Οὐ γὰρ φαυλότερον τ' ἀνιηρότατόν τε τί φημι (100)
 ἢ εἴ κεν κατέαζεν ἀνὴρ ἔπος ὅττι δέδωκεν.
 Ἀλλὰ γέ μοι βουλή φαῖνέν νυν ἀκούετε πάντες.
 Πλανήτην ἐγὼ οἶδα καλὸν χαριέστατον εἶναι
 οὐκ ἀπονόσφι ὁδοῦ ἀλλὰ σχεδόν· τῷ κλίμα δ' αὐτῷ
 ἥως εἰν Γαίῃ νήσων ἐρατῶν καριβείων. (105)
 θερμὸς δ' ἐστὶ ἀῆρ ἄλλ' οὐ μάλα ἡέλιός τε
 ἀκτίνῃσι φίλῃσι τόπον θάλπει ἐρατῇσιν
 τῷ μὲν παντοδαπαὶ μακρὰι φοίνικες ἔασιν
 καρποφόροι τε καλαὶ χλωραὶ καὶ χάρμα ἴδεσθαι
 λειμῶνές τ' ἐρατοὶ πολλὰ κρῆναί τε καὶ ἄνθη.⁶⁵⁴ (110)
 Τῷ μὲν πλανήτῃ θερμὴ καὶ ἔνεστι θάλασσα
 διαφανῆς καθαρὴ σαφείρῳ χρῶμ' ἐκυῖα
 ἡδὺς νηχέμεναι καὶ ἐκλέμεναι⁶⁵⁵ ἐπὶ θινί.
 Τῷ καὶ οἴωνοι περικαλλέες θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι
 ἔντομα σιγαλοέντα τε καὶ πολὰ θηρία ἄλλα (115)
 ἄλλ' οὐτὶς αἰσχρὸς ναίει περ θῆρ ἐνὶ πλάνῃ.

⁶⁵⁴ A *locus amoenus*; cities have been equated to planets throughout the *Astronautilia*, so it makes sense that something like a *locus amoenus* would also be expanded to the size of an entire planet. It's also worth remembering the connection between the *locus amoenus* and pastoral poetry, which presents an idealised view of the life of shepherds – in a way, one could see the *Astronautilia* as a sci-fi expansion of the pastoral genre. **Nostalgia** is a key theme of pastoral poetry, as well as of the *Astronautilia* itself. Additionally, the *Astronautilia* takes much of its inspiration from the Polyphemus episode of the *Odyssey*, and Polyphemus is commonly featured in pastoral poetry, e.g., Theocritus *Idyll* 6.6, 6.19, 7.152, 11.8, 11.80.

⁶⁵⁵ = κλίνω (?)

but I am not saying right now that anything worse can happen than troubling even a strong man with the abyss, but it is not the fitting time to abandon our quest for the sheep, since we, noble men, made a promise to our rulers. For I say that there is nothing more base and most annoying than if a man should break a promise he had given someone. But a plan has revealed itself to me, all of you listen now. I know a planet that is beautiful, very delightful, not far from our path, but close; and its climate is like the one that belongs to the lovely islands of the Caribbean on Earth. Since the air was hot, but not too much, and the sun warms the region with its friendly, lovely rays. On it there are tall palm-trees of all kinds, fruit-bearing and beautiful, blooming, and delightful to behold; the meadows, as well as the springs and blossom, are all lovely. On this planet, the sea is warm, transparent, clean, its colour resembles sapphires, it's pleasant to swim in and rest on the beach.⁶⁵⁶ And on it there are very beautiful ominous birds (wonders to behold), glittering insects, and many other animals, but no ugly beast reside on the planet at all.

⁶⁵⁶ References to purity in relation to bodies of water are often open to meta-poetic readings: Callimachus, for example, uses a dirty sea as a metaphor for unrefined epic (*Hymn* 2.108-112), so it's notable how *pure* and *refined* this sea is.

Τῷ καὶ οὐσῖαι φρόνιμαι τε βροτοῖς ἐϋκυῖαι
 ναῖουσ' εἰν πόντῳ καὶ πρόφρονές εἰσι ὁδίτῃς.
 Οὗτος μὲν πλάνης χαριέστατος ἐγγίστος τε
 τῶν ὄντων πλάνων τῷ ὁ μηδαμοῦ ἐστί ὁ πλάνης (120)

Οὗτοπος ὄνδ' ἡμᾶς πότι Κύπτα ἄνωγε πορεύειν.
 Τῷδ' ἀναπαυσάμενοι καὶ ἀποψυχησάμενοί τε
 ἄψ εἰς πλανήτης ψυχῶν σφετερῶν δέ τε μήνην
 πλήσαιμεν δ' ἐρρώομενοι⁶⁵⁷ ἵνα εἰρωτῶμεν
 τὸν λάσιον Γρογαλὸν μάντιν κρυσταλλοπέπηκτον (125)
 Μανδὺν ποῦ εὔρειν καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.»

᾽Ως ἐφάμην οἱ πάντες ἐπευφήμησαν ἐταῖροι
 ταῦτα τὰ πρηξάμεναι ὥς τοῖς βούλησα πλοίαρχος.
 Κύπτη φαυλοτάτῳ βουλή οὐκ ἦνδανε θυμῷ
 ἀλλὰ δὲ ὃν τε κότον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ κατάπεψεν.⁶⁵⁸ (130)

Αὐτὰρ ἔγωγε κυβερνήτῃ ροβότῳ ἐπίτελλον
 ἰθύνειν πλοῖον εἰς πλανήτην ἀναψύχης.
 Εἰν ὀλίγῳ πλάνης ἐρατεινὸς ἔδν ἐνὶ βάθει.
 Εἴσατο⁶⁵⁹ ὥς ἀστήρ γλαυκὸς λαμπρὸς τε φαεινὸς
 ὕστερον εἰς σφαῖραν μέτα βάλλετο⁶⁶⁰ μόρφησεν τε (135)

ὕστατον αὐτε χαμαὶ πέσομεν σὺν νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 πλάνην θαυμάζοντες ἐπεὶ ἐρατεινὸς ἔεσκεν
 θερμὸς καὶ πρόφρων χαριέστατος ὥς παράδεισος
 σχήματι τῷ τῷ ἐγὼ κατ' ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν ἔλεξα
 ἀλλὰ γ' ὕπαρ ἦεν πολὺ φέρτερον εἰσοράσθαι. (140)

⁶⁵⁷ = ῥώομαι.

⁶⁵⁸ = καταπέσσω, cf. *Iliad* 1.80-2 (*εἴ περ γάρ τε χόλον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ καταπέψη*), “For a king is mightier when he is angry at a lesser man. For even if he swallows down his anger for the one day, still afterwards he holds resentment in his heart until he fulfills it” (trans. Murray 1924, Loeb 170).

⁶⁵⁹ = εἶδομαι.

⁶⁶⁰ Μεταβάλλω is a technical word for translation; the μετα- prefix seems to go with both βάλλω and μορφαίω.

And in that place, intelligent beings that resemble humans reside in the water and are kind to travellers. This planet is the most pleasing and nearest of all existing planets, compared to the one that exists nowhere, the planet Utopos that Kypta has ordered us to travel towards. Once we've settled there and refreshed ourselves, let us sail with much speed back to the planet of the butterflies and their moon, so that we can ask the shaggy, cryogenically frozen, Grogal prophet how to find Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe."

So I spoke, and all my companions shouted in agreement to do these things that I had advised them as the ship's captain. This plan did not please the heart of the very base Kypta, but he swallowed his ill-will for the day. But I commanded the robotic pilot to direct the vessel towards the planet of refreshment. In a short time, the lovely planet emerged in the depths of space. It looked like a blue star, luminous and radiant, it transformed later on and metamorphosed into a sphere, and later still we sank to the ground with our black ship; feeling amazement at the planet because it was lovely, warm and gracious, very pleasing like a paradise in the manner that I had recounted to my companions, but it was much better to behold in reality.

Ἡμεῖς ἐρχόμενοι ἐ τεθήπαμεν τερπόμενοι κῆρ
αἶψα δὲ καὶ ἔταροι πρὸς καρποὺς χεῖρας ἱάλλον
τοὶ μὲν ἔφυν θάμνοις ἰδὲ καὶ δένδροις πολέεσσιν
πολλοὶ καὶ γλυκεροὶ γεῦσαι· κύρμινον⁶⁶¹ πολύηδν.
Οὐδ' ἔτι κίνδυνός τις ἔεσκεν φαρμακίων τοι (145)
ὥς καὶ ἐγὼ σάφα οἶδα ἐπεὶ πρόφρων τύχε πλάνης.
Πολλοὶ δ' οἰωνοὶ καὶ ἔντομα σιγαλοέοντα
ἄμφι ποταόμενοι γλυκυκερῆς φωνῆσιν ἔασον⁶⁶²
θαῦμα τεθηπέμεναι ἰδὲ καὶ φωνῶν τοι ἀκούειν.
Θηρία μὲν ἦσαν πλάνη καλὰ καὶ ἐρατεινὰ (150)
δορκάσι ἦδ' ἐλάφοισι εὐοικότα χάρμα ἴδεσθαι
καλὰ τε ποικιλόμορφ' ἕτεροις κέρασιν ἀραρόντα
ἡμερα· οὐδ' ἔτι⁶⁶³ τοῖς χθονίων ἔσκεν φόβος ἀνδρῶν
οὔτινα τῶν γνώμην μὲν ἔχον καὶ οὐ μεμάθοντο
ἀλλὰ μὲν ἡσυχίῃ ἦλθον πρὸς ἄνδρα ἕκαστον (155)
θῆρες καὶ ἔασάν γ' αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν καταρέξαι
ἄρτω θέρβεσθαι⁶⁶⁴ τὸν καὶ ἔχομεν κατὰ φόρβην.
Καὶ αἱ θύλειαι ται σύν σφισιν ἔμβρυα εἶχον
ἄμμ' ἔασάν σφε ἄμελγέμεναι ἰδὲ θηλάζεσθαι
οὐθάτοφιν· μάλα γὰρ μαλακαὶ αἱ θῆρες ἔεσκον. (160)
Ἐνθα τινὲς φῶτες γ' ἔθελον φιλότῃτι μιγῆναι
ἀλλοδαποῖς κεμάσιν· ὥς καὶ ἀπονόσφι γυναικῶν
δηθ' ἦσαν μοναχοὶ κρατερὴ δ' ἐπικεῖσει' ἀνάγκη.

⁶⁶¹ Very obscure, the closest I can think of is κυρτός or κύρτωμα (cognate with κύμα), which means 'bulging'; if we extend this metaphorically, we could imagine this describes juicy/ripe fruits such as berries? The Czech just translates it as 'food'.

⁶⁶² = ἄεισον (ἀεῖδω).

⁶⁶³ Subtly implies that they *would* be afraid of humans if they were around them for long enough.

⁶⁶⁴ Most likely from τρέφω (θρέψασθαι).

As we walked, we gazed at it with joy in our hearts, and suddenly my companions threw their hands at the fruits that grew from branches and all kinds of trees, they were numerous and sugary to the taste: very sweet fruits. And there wasn't any danger of poison either; as I knew for certain, since the planet was gracious. And the numerous ominous birds and shining insects that were flying around sang with sweet voices,⁶⁶⁵ a wonder to look at and to listen to their voices. There were animals on the planet that were beautiful and lovely and resembled antelope or deer; pleasant to behold, they were beautiful and came in many shapes, furnished with horns, and tame. But they had no fear yet for Earthly men, since they had no opinion about them and hadn't learnt about them from experience. But the animals calmly approached each man, and let themselves to be petted by them, be fed with the bread that we had for our food. And the female animals that had younglings with them let us to milk them and be suckled directly from their udders. For the animals were very gentle. Some men wanted to mingle in love with the alien fawns here, since they've also been isolated far from women for a long time, and strong necessity pressed upon them.

⁶⁶⁵ Insects with 'sweet' voices recalls book 8 with the description of the butterflies' singing, cf. notes on *Astr.* 8.48, 8.158, 8.187 for more on its' meta-poetic resonances with Hellenistic cicada imagery.

- Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ σφε πεπαυσέμεναι κρατερῶς ἐπίτελλον
 κερτόμενοις ἔπεσιν· τοὺς αἰσχυνὴ ἔλε θυμόν. (165)
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα φίλους μεῖναι τι ἄνωγον ἐταίρους
 βῆν ἵμεναι κατὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης⁶⁶⁶
 αὐλὸν χερσὶν ἔχων τὸν σαζώφωνα καλοῦσιν
 ἦρξα μὲν αὐλέμεναι· οἱ θαυμάζοντες ἔποντο
 [οἶδα περὶ πλάνου ἐκ κομπουτῆρος ἀγαννοῦ (170)
 μνημοσύνης τὴν καὶ «ΔΑΤΑΒΑΓΚ» κλῆσιν καλέουσιν]
 Αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ πόντου ἦρξαν φύσεες ἀναδύναι
 θηλείης Τριτόνεσσί τε νύμφησιν ἐῦκυϊαι
 τῆς ἀλῆης περὶ τῶν μῦθοί γε παλαιοὶ ἔασιν.⁶⁶⁷
 Ταὶ μὲν ἄνω ἦσαν θήλειαι ὥστε γυναῖκες (175)
 ἀλλὰ κάτω δ' εἶχον οὐράς ὥς ἰχθύες αὐταί.
 Ταὶ μὲν ἐν ἀβάθει κοῦραι ἀλὸς ἀθροόωντο
 αὐλῷ ἀκούουσαι τὸν σαζώφωνα καλοῦσιν
 ὥς τοῦ μὲν φωνὴ καταπυγοςύνην ἀνόρουσεν.
 Τῇσιν δ' ἀσπαστόν γε δοάσσατο κοιμηθῆναι (180)
 ἀνδράσιν ἀστροπορεύτησιν καὶ δεικνυατ' αὐτοῖς
 οὐδε τέ τοι Φράντου δέον ἦεν τὴν κατὰ πρῆξιν.
 Ἥμεῖς εἴματα πάντα ταχῶς γυίων σκεδάσαντες
 ἦλθομεν εἰς πόντον νύμφης φιλότῃ μιγῆναι
 αἱ μὲν εἰν ἀβάθει κατεδέξαντ' ἄνδρα ἐκάστη. (185)

⁶⁶⁶ cf. *Iliad* 1.34, 2.209, 6.347, 9.182, 13.798, 23.59, *Odyssey* 13.85, 13.220.

⁶⁶⁷ Alexandrian footnote, for Tritons cf. *Aeneid* 5.824, Flaccus *Argonautica* 1.679, Statius *Thebaid* 371, Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 4.31-7, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 9.21.4, Lucian *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* 14, Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 4.1539, etc.; for nymphs, think of narratives about Achilles' mother (the nymph Thetis), esp. Catullus 64, and Statius' *Achilleid*. (notice that many of these examples are directly related to the voyage of the Argo).

But I sternly ordered them to stop in mocking words, and shame seized their minds.⁶⁶⁸ But then I ordered my dear companions to wait while I went to go down along the shore of the loud-roaring sea, holding a pipe in my hand that they call a 'saxophone', I began to play it, and those that were following me were amazed.⁶⁶⁹ [I knew about the planet because of our computer's brilliant memory, which they also call a 'databank']. And creatures immediately began to emerge from the sea, females that resembled Tritons or sea-nymphs, whom there are ancient narratives about. They were female above as women are, but below they have tails like fish. These water-girls thronged in the shallow water, listening to the pipe that they call a 'saxophone', since its sound arouses lust.⁶⁷⁰ And it seemed welcoming to them to sleep with the cosmonauts, and they indicated this to them without needing Franta for this matter. Quickly shedding all our clothes from our limbs, we went into the sea to mingle in love with the nymphs, and then in the shallow water each woman received a man.

⁶⁶⁸ This sets Oudeis' crewmates apart from Mandys, who *does* have sex with animals (e.g., *Astr.* 10.133).

⁶⁶⁹ I'd mentioned in a note on *Astr.* 14.110 that I think one could interpret the *Astronautilia* as a pastoral sci-fi: the key instrument of pastoral poetry or of shepherds in classical literature is the syrinx or pan-flute, here we have the use of the saxophone instead.

⁶⁷⁰ This is almost a reversal of the siren episode of the *Odyssey*, here we have an alluring sound inciting lust in female humanoid sea creatures.

Οὕτως ἠῶθέν τ' εἰς ἠέλιον καταδύντα
 ὕδατι εἰν θερμῷ γε πεπράξαμεν ἔργα ἐρώτων
 νύμφης σὺν ἀλήσι ἐπεὶ ἀπόνόσφι γυναικῶν
 δηθ' ἦμεν μοναχοὶ κρατερὴ δ' ἐπικείσατ' ἀνάγκη.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ κατέδου ἱερὸν φάος ἠέλιοιο (190)
[ξεινιακὸν οὗ πως ὥς ἡμετέρῃ ἐνὶ Γαίῃ]
 αἱ μὲν νόστησαν νύμφαι εἰς βένθεα πόντου
 ὕπνος δ' ἅμμε κίχησεν ἐνὶ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης.
 Οὕτως ζῶομεν πλάνῃ ἀποπαύσεος ἄνδρες
 κάρπους φοινίκων ἄλλων δένδρων τε ἔδοντες (195)
 κογχάων δέ τινων μαλακὸν κρέας τὰς μὲν ἐδείκνυν
 νύμφαι τὰ ἄλλαι· πίνομεν γάλα τῶν ἀπὸ θήρων
 καὶ νύμφης ἀλήσι πεπρήξαμεν ἔργα ἐρώτων
 οὐδε τιν' ἐνδείην ἔχομεν φῶτες ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
 ἀλλὰ δὲ ῥῆϊδιον βίοτον καὶ χάσματα πολλὰ (200)
 οὐδ' ἔτι κοσμοπορευέμεναι νῦν θυμὸς ἄνιαγεν
 Μανδὺν ζητῆσαι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἀλλ' αὖτις μίμνειν βίοτον καὶ ἡδὺν ἔχουσθαι.
 Ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τέκτυκεν τετελεσμένον ἦν τ' ἔτι μίμνειν.

And so, from dawn to the setting of the sun, we performed erotic deeds in the warm water with the water-nymphs, since we'd been alone for a long time, far from women, and strong necessity hung upon us. But when the holy light of the sun set [strange not at all like on our Earth], then these girls returned into the depths of the sea and sleep caught up with us on the ocean's edge. And so we men lived on this planet of refreshment, eating the fruits of palm-trees and other trees, as well as the soft flesh of certain mussels that the water-nymphs had shown us. We drank milk from the animals and performed erotic deeds with the water-nymphs, and we had no shortage of anything on this planet. but rather an easy way of life and many pleasant things, and our hearts did not encourage us to journey through the cosmos yet, but to stay and have a simple way of life. But it turned out that it was impossible for us to continue to stay here.

- Ἦματι μὲν ἐν' ἐγὼ καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι (205)
 κείμενοι ἤμεν ἐνὶ φλοίσβου ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης
 ἰχθυοκέκοισιν σὺν νύμφησιν ἀλίσιν
 καὶ λὺγ'⁶⁷¹ ἀοιδομένης⁶⁷² καὶ αὐλείων μὲν ἔγωγε
 αὐλὸν χερσὶν ἔχων τὸν σαζώφωνα καλοῦσιν.
 Ἦμῖν σὺν Φράντης μεταθήτωρ ἦν ἐπὶ θινὶ (210)
 ῥῆμα μετάθεσθαι νυμφάων ἡὲ καὶ ἡμῶν
 καὶ γε διὰ Φράντην περὶ νυμφάων⁶⁷³ μεμάθηκα
 ἦν διὰ αἰτὴν ξείνοισιν πρόφρονες εἶην.
 Καὶ γὰρ νύμφησιν μὲν ἐνὶ βένθεσσι θαλάσσης
 ἄρσενα τοῦ ἰδίου γένες φύλου δέ τ' ἔασιν (215)
 ἀλλὰ μάλ' ὀγκηροὶ καὶ ράθυμοί περ ὀχεύειν
 ὥς μὲν ἐπιχθόνιοι πολυάγριοι εἰσι λέοντες
 τοὺς δέ τ' ὀτρυνέμεναι αἰὲν σπεύδουσι λείαναι
 τούτων ἄρσενα νυμφάων μὲν ἐοικότα ἦσαν.
 Ἀλλ' εἴ κεν ἄρσην τις ὀτρύνεντο καὶ ἐπίβησεν (220)
 ῥῆϊδιως νύμφη τεύξειεν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον
 πάντοθεν ὄμβριμοὶ εἰσιν ἐνὶ κώλοισι ἅπασι.
 Τοῦνεκα τοὺς ξείνους νύμφαι ἄλλαι προτιμῶσιν.
 Ὡς ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ θινὶ κακείμενοι ἤμεν ἐταῖροι.
 Αὐτίκα βρόντος ἔπαυσε βαρὺς τετάραξε δ' ἀῆρα (225)
 αἱ νύμφαι φοβεραὶ κατέδυν εἰς βένθα πόντου.

⁶⁷¹ = λίγα (υ/ι).

⁶⁷² = ἀειδομένης.

⁶⁷³ N.b., it's unclear whether these '*nymphs*' are supposed to be the low-ranking water divinities we'd expect or just young human-like girls, since νύμφη is usually capitalised when referring to the goddesses. Considering this, it's most likely referring to the latter, and so there continues to be a lack of '*real*' divine epiphany in the *Astronautilia*.

One day, my trusty companions and I were lying on the edge of the noisy ocean, along with the fish-tailed water-nymphs, and singing with clear voices, and I was playing, holding the pipe that they call a 'saxophone' in my hand. Our translator Franta was with us on the beach to translate the nymphs' words, as well as our own, and on Franta's account we learnt about the nymphs, namely why they were so gracious towards aliens. For these nymphs also had in the depths of the ocean males of the same genus and species as them, but they're very bulky and careless when mating, just as the lions that do much hunting are on Earth, whom the lionesses are always trying eagerly to arouse: the nymphs' males resembled these. But if some man should become aroused and 'board' her, then he could easily inflict utter destruction upon the nymph, since the weight on all her limbs was great. Which is why the water-nymphs prefer to honour aliens. So, me and my companions reclined on the beach. Suddenly the booming sound of thunder stirred up and shook the air, the nymphs dived in fear down into the depths of the sea.

Αὐτὰρ δ' ὄρθωσας τάχ' ἐγὼ περίβλεψα ἅπαντα
 θινὰ τε καὶ πόντον καὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὸν ὕπερθεν
 ζητοῦν τῆς βρουτῆς κρουνὸν κονάβου τε καὶ ἀρχήν.
 Ἐξαπίνης κύμβην εἶδον κόσμου γλαφυροῖο (230)
 μικρὴν τὴν ἔχομεν πηκτὴν σὺν νηϊ μελαίνῃ
 μίην ἔκ γε δυοῖν πτάσθαι εἰν αἰθέρι δίῳ
 πύραυλος δέ τε οἱ φλογυρὸν κέρκον παράθηκεν
 αἶψα μάλα παμμένη ἀφανίζετο ὅττι τάχιστα
 τὴν εἰδὼς ἰαχῇ ὤτρυνον πάντας ἐταίρους. (235)
 Ἄψ εἰς νῆα θοὴν τρέχομεν γυμνοὶ περ ἐόντες
 καὶ ἔνδον δ' ἠῦρον τάδε κτήσια πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ
(οἷα μὲν ἄμμι δέδωκεν ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
τῷ κοίλῳ πολέμου ἔνεκεν σκυλάκων γαλέων τε)
 οὐ πλεῖν νῦν ἔμεναι εἰν νηϊ τ' ἄφαντα γένεσθαι (240)
 οὐν τοῖσιν μὲν ἄφαντοι ἔβαν Κύπτης δέ τε κύμβῃ
 ~ βελτίον οἳ γ' εἶη κλέψαι εὐεργέα νῆα
 ἀλλὰ γε τὴν χαλεπὸν καὶ τρηχὺ τοί ἐστι κυβερνᾶν
 οὐδ' αὖ Κύπτα νόησε κυβερνᾶν νῆα μέλαιναν ~

But I quickly looked around at everything once I'd stood up, such as at the beach and the sea and the broad sky above, searching for the source of the thunder and the origin of the noise. I suddenly saw a small ship capable of traversing the hollow cosmos that we had anchored along with our black ship, it was one of two that flew in the heavenly air, and the rocket had a fiery tail attached, and in seconds it disappeared as quickly as possible, and once I'd seen it, I roused all my companions with a shout. We ran back to our swift ship despite being completely naked, and inside we found that all our fine possessions (those that the king had given us on the hollow planet because of the war between the dogs and cats) were no longer in the ship and had disappeared, and Kypta had disappeared along with them, as well as the ship ~ it would have been better for him to steal our well-wrought ship, but it would have been difficult and rough for him to pilot, since Kypta did not know how to pilot a black ship ~

Ἄσβεστος γὰρ ἔνωρτο χόλος θρασυμοῖς ἐτάροισιν (245)
 ὥς εἶδον πλοῦτόν γ' ἀφανισάμενον κατὰ νῆα
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτὸς δ' ἀταραχθεῖς κλεψεὸς ἦα
 (χρυσοῦ δ' οὐ τιμῶ ὅτι τοι κυνικός σοφός εἶμι)⁶⁷⁴
 οἱ δ' ἄλλοι ἔταροι κλαίοντ' ὥς νήπια τέκνα
 χαίτας ὀξὺ τίλον κροῦον μαλερώς σφισι κρᾶτα (250)
 – οὕτως μὲν πλοῦτός γ' ἀποφώλιον ἄνδρα τίθησι –
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼν ἐτάρους παῦσαι ἔπεσιν ἐπίτελλον
 καὶ σφας ὥτρυνον Κύπτην τῇ νηὶ δίωkein
 οὐ χρυσοῦ ἔνεκεν – ἔνεκεν κύμβης ζακενοῖο
 (τὴν μὲν καὶ σκάφος ἦ βᾶριν κλῆσιν καλέουσι) (255)
 καὶ φόρβης γε πυρηνιακῆς ἥδ' ἔνδον ἔεσκεν.
 Αὐτίκα οἱ ἔταροί μοι ἡσύχιοι ἐγένοντο
 ἦρξαν μὲν πλοῖον Κύπτου διὰ χάσμα διώκειν
 αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες (260)
 ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 κύμβην καὶ Κύπτην τε διωκέμεναι διὰ χάσμα.
 Οὐδ' ἔτι πλεῖν κύμβην λεύσεσθαι νῦν δυνάμεσθα
 ὥς δὲ πολλὸν πρότερον φεύγεσκεν ἀνὴρ πολύμητις⁶⁷⁵
 ἀλλὰ ἔγ' αἰσθητῆρες ἐνὶ πλοίῳ εὔρηκαν (265)
 ῥίμφα μάλα παταμένην βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο.

⁶⁷⁴ cf. *Astr.* 7.105.

⁶⁷⁵ An epithet usually used of Odysseus.

For an unquenchable rage rose up amongst my brave companions when they saw that their riches had disappeared from the ship. But I was unperturbed by the theft (I don't put value in gold, because I'm a cynical scientist), my other companions, however, shouted like silly little children, they tore out their loose hair passionately and violently beat their heads – this is how wealth makes men useless⁶⁷⁶ – But I commanded my companions with a speech to halt and I encouraged them to chase Kypta in our ship, not for the sake of money – but for the sake of our hollow ship (which they also call a 'skiff' or 'barge'), and for the sake of the nuclear power that was within it. Immediately, my companions became quiet, and began to pursue Kypta's vessel through the abyss of space. The rocket immediately propelled the beautifully constructed ship, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind, and from there we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos, chasing the boat and Kypta through the abyss of space. We were no longer able to see the boat, because the tricky man had fled much earlier, but the sensors on our vessel had found him flying very swiftly through the depths of the empty universe.

⁶⁷⁶ Homily/sententia.

Τόνδε διωκόμεναι νῦν ἤρξαμεν ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ
 πολλὰ δ' ἀρηόμενοι⁶⁷⁷ μάλα γὰρ χόλος εἶλε ἅπαντας
 ἄνδρας καὶ ῥοβότους ζώωπλαστον δέτε Φράνταν.
 Ἐννήμαρ χθόνιον πλέομεν κόσμου διὰ χάσμα (270)
 ἀλλ' οὔτις λῆψις μὲν ἔφαινε διωκομένοισιν·
 μικρὸν μὲν σκάφος ἦν παύρων τ' ἀνδρῶν ἐπιβῆναι
 ἀλλὰ δὲ ῥηϊδίον ἰδὲ καὶ ταχὺ κοσμοπορεύειν.
 Ἄλλ' δ' ἐπεὶ δέκατόν γε φάνη χθόνιον νέον ἦμαρ
 κύμβην φευγομένην μὲν ἐλεύσομεν τηλεορώσει⁶⁷⁸ (275)
 ὀρθῶς ὀφθαλμοῖσι⁶⁷⁹ τὸ γὰρ μέγα χάρμα τέτυκτο
 αὐτίκα πυραύλου αὐξάνειν ἵνα ἐπίτελλον
 ἄνδρας καὶ ῥοβότους· ἦδ' ἔπατο Τόλμα μάλ' αἶψα.
 Ὡς οἰωνὸς κίρκος στρουθὸν γε διώκει⁶⁸⁰
 ῥίμφα μάλα πτάμενος χήλας ἅς πρόσθεν ὀρεγνὺς (280)
 ὥς καὶ Τόλμα φέρειν ταχέως ἡμᾶς ῥοβότον τε
 ῥίμφα μάλα πταμένη Κύπτην μεμαυῖα λάβεσθαι
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς πρῆξις φάνε λήψεος ἀστροπορεύτης
 ὥς Κύπτης γε διωκόμενος σοφὸς ἔσκε πορεύειν
 πάμπολλας μήτεις δὲ ὕφηνεν⁶⁸¹ φευγέμεν ἡμᾶς. (285)

⁶⁷⁷ = ἀράομαι.

⁶⁷⁸ The televised gaze is a common feature of the *Astronautilia*, cf. my note on televised spectacle (*Astr.* 7.228).

⁶⁷⁹ This description is undercut a little by the fact that they are looking at a *mediated* image; they're not looking *directly* at the ship, they are looking at mediated image, this seems to imply that the characters here consider the television and sensors as *literal* extensions of their own vision and senses (very Posthumanist).

⁶⁸⁰ cf. *Astr.* 17.79-81.

⁶⁸¹ cf. *Iliad* 7.324, 9.93, *Odyssey* 4.678, 4.739, 9.422, 13.303, 13.386.

We now began chasing him with pained hearts, making many curses, for rage had seized everyone: the men and robots, as well as Franta, the counterfeit animal. For nine Earthly days we sailed through the abysses of the universe, but no method of catching him revealed itself to us as we chased him. The skiff was too small for even a couple men to board, but that meant it could journey across the cosmos quickly and easily. But when the tenth fresh Earthly day appeared, we saw the ship fleeing on the television right with our own eyes, for it was a great joy. I immediately ordered that my men and robots increase the power of the rocket, and the Tolma flew very quickly. Like how that ominous bird, the hawk, chases a sparrow, flying very swiftly whilst stretching out its talons in front;⁶⁸² so the Tolma carried us quickly, including the robots, flying very swiftly, striving to capture Kypta. But regardless, no solution for catching him revealed itself to us as we journeyed amongst the stars, since the hunted Kypta was smart in his navigation, and he weaved all kinds of courses of action in order to escape us.

⁶⁸² This simile is reminiscent of *Iliad* 22.139-142, the important simile that describes Achilles' chase of Hector. Here, though, the two epic heroes are equated to the spaceships, which helps us make sense of my point on the previous page about the ship's sensors being considered extensions of the humans' senses.

Τὶ πρῶτον τί δ' ἔπειτα τί δ' ὑστάτιον καταλέξω
 τοῦ Κύππου περὶ μηχανίης τε νόου πολυπύκνου
 ὡς ὅγε δ' εἰς ἄστρας βαρέας ἄμμ' ἦγε ὁδοῖο
 ἣ δε τότε' ἐκκλισεν νηὸς δρόμου ἱς βαρύτητος
 ἀλλ' ὡς ὀρθωσαν γε κυβερνῆται δρόμον αὖτις (290)

Κύπτα δ' ἔπειτα φύγεν ἐκ κύκλου τηλεορώσει
 καὶ δέ τε μιν δέομεν ζητεῖν ἐνὶ χάσματι κόσμου
 τηλαισθητήρεσσι· τὸ γὰρ μάλ' ἀλέξατο Κύπτην.
 Εἰς τέλος Κύπτα σοφὸς κύμβην ποτὶ ἄστρα ἵθυνεν
 τὸν μὲν νευτρονίον τοι ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέουσι (295)

ἀστρονόμοι καινοί· μάλα γὰρ βαρὺ σωμά πέρ ἐστι
 οὐρανίον πυκινῶς ἔνδον τεθλίμαται ὕλη
 ὡς ὅτι μὲν κυβικὸν ἑκαταστόμετρον τῆς ὕλης
 ἔλξε βάρος τόννων δεκάκις γ' ἑκατομμυριώνων⁶⁸³
 καὶ δέ τε συνθλίψους ἔνεκεν μικρὸς μάλα ἐστὶν (300)
 ὡς σφαίρης διάμετρον ἔχειν δέκα χιλιόμετρα.

Οἱ μὲν νευτρονιοὶ ταχέως στροφесοῦνται ἄστρες
 ἀκτίνας δέ τινας γ' ἀφιᾶσιν ῥαδιωφώνῳ
 σφύζοντες· τότε τοὺς κικλήσκουσιν *πούλσαρας*
 ἄνδρες ἀστρονόμοι – ῥωμαῖον καὶ ἔπος ἐστί – (305)

⁶⁸³ Lit. 'ten hundred million' = one trillion.

What should I narrate first, what next, and what at the end, concerning Kypta's wiles and very cunning mind? How he led our path towards weighty stars and then the force of their gravity bent our ship's course, but when our pilots corrected the course again, then Kypta fled from the orbit out of the sight of our television, and we had to search for him in the abysses of the universe with our remote sensors: for it helped Kypta out greatly. In the end, the clever Kypta directed his ship towards what new astronomers call a 'neutron star', for this celestial body is very heavy, and matter is densely squeezed within it, so that a cubic centimetre of matter has the attractive weight of one trillion tons, and it's very small thanks to how it's been compressed, so it has the diameter of a sphere that's ten kilometres. These neutron stars spin quickly, and emit certain rays that pulsate in the radio frequency, which is why astronomers call them 'pulsars' (this word is also Latin).

- Τῶν ποτὶ πουλσάρων ἓνα Κύπτης βάριν ἴθυνεν
 ὥς αἰσθητῆρας βλάψαι εἰν νηϊ μελαίνῃ
 σφύγμασιν ἀκτίνων τὰς ἀστήρ σφόδρα ἦσι
 καὶ ὥς βήσονται μὲν ἄφαντος ἀστροπορεύων.
- Τῷδε κυβερνήτῃ ροβότῳ νυν ἐγὼ ἐπίτελλον (310)
 Κύπτῃ δ' αἶψα ἔπεσθαι ἐπεὶ θέλε φῦναι ἄφαντος
 καὶ γε σοφὸς ροβότης ὀρθὴν ὁδὸν εὖ ἐλόγισεν
 ὥς μὴ μὲν βλαβερόν τι πάθῃ νηὺς ἀστρονέουσα
 ἄστερι νευτρονίῳ δέ περ ἐγγὺς ἐοῦσα ὁδοῖο
 ὥς μαγνητικὸν μὲν ἔχει πούλσαρ πέρι ἀγρὸν (315)
 καὶ ἀγρὸν βαρύτητος ἐπεὶ πυκινὴν ἔχει ὕλην.
 Ἀλλὰ γε πλοιάρχῳ μὲν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἦνδανε θυμῷ
 κυρτὴ ἐοῦσα ὁδός· χερσὶν ὀρθῶσα ἐμῇσιν
 εὐθέα νηχέμεναι· τόδε νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησα
 ὥς μαγνητικῷ γ' ἀγρῷ κινδυνος ἔνεστι (320)
 τῇσδε πυρηνιακῆς φόρβης εἰν νηϊ μελαίνῃ
 καὶ αὐτοῦ γε κινητῆρος ὃς νῆα ἔλανοι.
 Τοῦτό γε καὶ ὑμῖν χαλεπὸν τι εὖ καταλέξαι
 ἀνδράσιν εἰκοστῷ αἰῶνος ἢ ἐ γυναιξίν
 ὥς ἔτι οὐκ ἄδην γινῶσται φυσικοῖσι νόμοισιν (325)
 ἀλλὰ γε νηὺς ἐμὴ ἔκ γάρ γ' ἔρρωγε τάχιστα
 εἴ κεν μὴ ρόβοτός τις ἀνοίγνυ τζέτ⁶⁸⁴ ἐπίκουρον.

⁶⁸⁴ A transliteration of 'jet' (Czech 'džet').

Kypta directed his barge towards one of these pulsars in order to harm the sensors on our black ship with the pulsating rays that the star violently emits and in order to disappear from our view as we journeyed amongst the stars. Now I ordered the robotic pilot to quickly follow Kypta since he wanted to disappear, and the wise robot calculated the correct path well so that the ship won't suffer anything harmful whilst swimming amongst the stars when our course is near to the neutron star, since the pulsar is enveloped by a magnetic field and a gravitational field since it has a dense mass. But as the ship's captain, the fact that our course was curved didn't please my mind. But I – fool that I am – didn't realise this, that there was danger in the magnetic field to the nuclear fuel in our black ship and to the engine itself that propels the ship. This is also somewhat difficult to describe clearly to those of you from the twentieth century, both men and women, because you don't know enough yet about the laws of physics, but my ship would have broken into pieces very quickly, if a certain robot had not opened the auxiliary jet.

- Σμερδαλέη μεγάλη ἔλασεν ἱς νῆα μέλαιναν
 πυρήνιακή· ταχέως πτάτο εἰς μέγα χάσμα
 πούλσαρος ἄπο οὐλομένου Κύπτοῦ δέ τε Κύμβης (330)
 καὶ δὲ φέρεν τηλοῦ ἀπονόσφιν κοσμοπορεύτων⁶⁸⁵
 τοὺς κομπουτῆρες εἶχόν γ' αὐτῶν ἐνὶ μνήμησ
 ἢ τοὺς ναυτῆρες ἴδμεν καὶ λάβραξες⁶⁸⁶ αὐτοὶ
 ἡελίων ἰδὲ πλανήτων αὐτῶν δ' ἔπι ζώων
 ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς ἔφορεν κρατερὴ ἀτόμων μεγάλη ἱς (335)
 ἄγνωτον κόσμονδε ὅπου οὐκ οἶδαμεν οὔτι.
 Ἡμεῖς μὲν Κύπτου κύμβης χρυσοῦ τε λάθοντες
 χαίτας νῦν τίλομεν κροῦμεν δέ τε κρᾶτα ἕκαστος
 καὶ βαρὺ ἀχνύμενοι δέ τ' ἐπεύχεσθαι μεμάαμεν
 εἴ κέν τις ζώῃ θεὸς εἰν κόσμοιο βάθεςσιν (340)
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο εὐχομένοισιν⁶⁸⁷
 καὶ ἀποφώλιος ὢν ὅτ' ἀμηχανίῃ ἔχε θυμὸν
 νεῖκεσκον ρόβοτον ὃ τὸ τζέτ ἐπίκουρον ἀνοίγνυ
 ἀντὶ ἐπαινέμεναι· τόδε καὶ μάλα νήπιος ἦα.
 Ἀλλὰ γε τὸν Κύπτην σὺν χρυσῷ καὶ σκάφει αὐτῷ (345)
 ἀστρου ἱς βαρύτητος ἐς αὐτοῦ σῶμα κατέλξεν
 ὥς γε μάλιστα ἔοικεν ἐπεὶ ἐγγὺς πάτο μάλλον.
 Οὕτως μὲν πλοῦτος ἀποφώλιον ἄνδρα τίθησι
 καὶ οἱ ἄφειλε νόον σκευάζων αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον.
 Ἐνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεςσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο (350)
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου ἄπο μὲν νενοημένοι αὐτοί.

⁶⁸⁵ This line is a little obscure: τηλοῦ ἀπονόσφιν is followed by a genitive of separation, but it's unclear how κοσμοπορεύτων is supposed to be translated, lit. '*far from our cosmos-journey*'.

⁶⁸⁶ Very obscure, could be from some form of λάβραξ, but the meaning clashes with the Czech translation of '*experienced*'.

⁶⁸⁷ Protasis of a '*vivid future*' conditional (εἰ + ἄν + subj., '*if by chance...*'), we'd expect the apodosis to be in the future or aorist tense, but we are surprised with an imperfect indicative, a '*past general*' conditional ('*but no solution would...*').

A terrible force was powerfully repelling our black, nuclear ship; it quickly flew into the great abyss away from the ruinous pulsar and from Kypta's ship, and it carried us far, far away from our intended route through the cosmos which our computer kept in its memory, and which we experienced sailors were familiar with, as well as from the suns and planets and the beings that live on them.⁶⁸⁸ But the strong and mighty atomic force carried us into the unknown cosmos where we knew nothing at all. Forgetting about Kypta, the barge, and the money, we now tore out our hair and we each beat our heads, and with heavy grief we tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, but no solution would reveal itself to us as we prayed. And being useless, since helplessness held my mind, I chided the robot that opened the auxiliary jet instead of praising it: this is how very foolish I was. But the star's gravitational power dragged Kypta down into its own body, along with the money and his skiff, as seemed most likely, since he flew very near it. This is how wealth makes men useless: it removes their capacity for reason while preparing utter destruction for them. From there we flew through the depths of the empty cosmos, glad to have escaped death, but also despairing hopelessly.

⁶⁸⁸ This last verse is also a little obscure.

Book O

*[Τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλίδος κούρης τοῦ πέλωρος καὶ ἀγαθοῦ
σωτήρος σχήματι ἀρχετύπω]*

Οὕτως μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 χώρη ἀγνώτη· βάλε μὲν πυρεηνιακὴ ἱς
 σφόδρ' αὐξανομένη μαγνητικῶ ἐνὶ ἀγρῶ
 πούλσαρος ὥς καὶ πρότερον κατάλεξα αἰοίδων.⁶⁸⁹
 Τῆς νηὸς σπουδὴν κωλύσαι περ μεμαόντες (5)
 πυραύλους γε πάλιν βάλλειν ἐποιήσαμεν ἄνδρες
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο πειράουσιν
 παύσασθαι πλοῖον· μεγάλη μάλα ὤθετο ὁρμὴ.
 Ἀλλὰ βάδην τε βάδην μεγάλη φθινέσκετο ὁρμὴ
 πυραύλων ὑπο βαλλομένων νόστησέ τε ἀρχὴ (10)
 ἰθύνειν πλοῖον διὰ χάσματ' ἀβένθεα κόσμου
 ἀλλὰ μὲν οὔτις οἶδε τὸ ποῦ στάσεως ἐνὶ κόσμῳ
 οὐ ρόβοτος δ' οὐ κομπουτήρ δ' οὐ καὶ βροτὸς ἀνὴρ.
 Ἥμεῖς δισσέλπεις τεταραγμένοι ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ
 πρῶτον μὲν θέλομεν παῦσαι δέ τ' ἀποψυχέσθαι (15)
 χέρσῳ ἐνὶ στερεῷ· μάλα θρύπτετο κόσμος ἀπείρων.

⁶⁸⁹ cf. *Astr.* 12.84, a self-referential comment on the literary nature of the epic.

Book 15

[The events concerning the princess, the monster, and the valiant saviour in archetypal manner⁶⁹⁰]

And so, we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos in an unknown part of space, because the nuclear force shot us here, since it grew violently in power in the pulsar's magnetic field, just as I narrated in the previous song. To hinder the speed of our ship, we made the rockets fire backwards, but regardless, no solution revealed itself to us at all as we made our attempt to stop the vessel, since the onward motion seemed too strong. But gradually, the mighty momentum dwindled little-by-little because of the firing rockets and the power to direct the vessel through the cavernous abysses of the cosmos returned, but no one knew where we were situated in the cosmos, no robot knew, nor did the computer, nor even any mortal man. With despairing, perplexed, and grieving hearts, we initially wanted to stop and recuperate ourselves on solid ground, since the boundless cosmos shattered us greatly.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁹⁰ i.e., the archetype of the epic hero being **lost at the edge of the known world**, having dalliances with princesses (and difficult labours to fulfil), e.g., Jason with Medea (and the brazen bulls) in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, Theseus with Ariadne (and the Minotaur) in Catullus 64, Aeneas with Dido in Vergil's *Aeneid*, and Odysseus with Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*.

⁶⁹¹ Technically, this should be translated as '*the boundless cosmos was greatly shattered*', but the Czech translates it in the active sense.

Αὐτίκα αἰσθητῆρας ὀτρύνομεν εἰσοράασθαι
 πλανήτην ἐπιτήδειον καὶ ζωοφόρου τε
 Γαίῃ ἡμετέρῃ τοι εὐκότα τῷ γε δύναιτο
 νηῦς παυσέσθαι ἡμεῖς δέ τ' ἀποψύχεσθαι (20)
 τὸν μὲν αἰσθητῆρες ἐνὶ κόσμῳ βάθεσσιν
 ἡῦρον – τεχνάων πυκὰ θαύματα ἐσσομενάων –
 καὶ ποτὶ τὸν πλάνην ἴθυνον νῆα μέλαιναν.
 Ἐπτήμαρ πλέομεν ποτὶ πλάνην τὸν δέ τ' ἔδειξαν
 τηλαισθητῆρες τεχνάων θαύματα μακρὰ (25)
 καὶ τὸν μὲν κίχομεν τρίτον εἶν συστήματι πλάνων
 ἡελίου ἅπο τοῦ ἰδίου ὥς Γαῖά περ ἔστιν
 ἀλλὰ τι μικρότερον καὶ κουφότερον ἐπιβῆναι
 πάντες ἀθλητῆρες ἐπὶ πλάνῃ μὲν ἔφυμεν
 ρίμφα μάλα τροχέειν ὕψοῦ τηλοῦ τε ἀλᾶσθαι⁶⁹² (30)
 τοῦ καὶ ἡέλιος ψυχρότερος ἢ χθονίοιο
 αἴθριος οὐρανὸς ἦν σμικρῶς δέ τε οὔτι μάλα δῆν.
 Τούτῳ τῷ πλάνῃ μὲν ἐρυσσάμεθ' ἀστερονῆα
 καὶ δέ τ' ἀποψύχοντ' ἔταροι χλωρῇ ἐνὶ ὕλῃ
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου ἅπο μὲν νενομήμενα αὐτοῖ (35)

⁶⁹² = ἄλλομαι.

We immediately turned on the sensors to look out for a suitable planet that could support life similar to our Earth, which we can rest our ship on and recuperate ourselves on. Our sensors discovered one in the depths of the cosmos (the crafty wonders of future technologies!), and I directed our black ship towards this planet. For seven days we sailed to this planet that the remote sensors (great wonders of technology) pointed out, and then we reached the third of the planets from the sun in the system, just like Earth. But it was somewhat smaller and lighter to walk on, we all became athletes on this planet, we could run very swiftly and leap far up high, their sun was also colder than the Earth's, the sky was a little clear, but not much. We moored our starship on this planet and my companions recuperated themselves in a blooming forest,⁶⁹³ glad to have escaped death, but also despairing hopelessly.

⁶⁹³ Both the term 'blooming/fresh' (χλωρός) and 'forest' (ὕλη) have meta-literary resonances: χλωρός can relate to novelty (like νέος and καινός), and ὕλη can also refer to literary material.

ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ὀλίγου τ' ἀποπεψυχηκάμεθ' ἄνδρες
 τῷ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐτάρους κρίνας πίσυρας ὅχ' ἀρίστους⁶⁹⁴
 πέμψα γε τὴν χώρηνδ' ἵμεναι ἰδὲ καὶ σκοπέσθαι
 αἵτινες οὐσίαι εἶην χθονὶ βρρῶματ' ἔδουσαι
 εἷ αἱ ἀγριόθυμοι ὑπερφίαλαί τε κακαὶ τε (40)
 ἡὲ φιλόξενοι καὶ θυμόν δ' ἡδὺν ἔχουσαι
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἄνευ ὀπλων· ἐμπειρεῖη δ' ἐδίδαξεν
 ὥς πάντες μὲν ἔχον καψησιν ἀμύμονα ὄπλα
 οἷά τε συγγραφέες σαῖ-φαῖ *φείσρους* καλέουσιν
 αἶψα δὲ τοῖς μέγα ἄστρ' φάνη ξείνοισι δόμοισι (45)
 θᾶσσον ἦλθουντες τηλεσκοπέοντο ἅπαντα.
 Οὐσίαι πολλαὶ μὲν ἔναιον ἐνὶ πτολιέθρῳ
 ἀνθρώποισιν ἐοικυῖαι ἀλλ' ἀσθενέες περ
 μηκότεραι καὶ λεπτότεραι⁶⁹⁵ ἔνεκεν βαρύτητος
 κουφοτέρης ἢ περ χθονίοις φωτέσσ' ἐπίκειται (50)
 ἀλλὰ δέ τίς γε φάνεσκε λύπη κρατέσθαι ἅπαντας
 πανταχοῦ ἢ αἰεὶ ἦν κλαυθμὸς κωκυτός τε.
 Οἱ μὲν ἔτι σκοπέοντες ἰδρύσαντες δέτε τάξιν
 αὐτῶν τεχνάων ὅτι χεῖρων ἡμετέρης ἦν
 ἅψ' ἀπονόστησαν ποτὶ ὕλην ἡὲ τὸ πλοῖον (55)
 καὶ νῦν ἡγγεῖλον τάδ' ἶδον μοι ἡὲ ἐταῖροις.

⁶⁹⁴ Very Homeric, cf. *Iliad* 1.69, 2.761, 3.110, 5.843, 6.76, 7.221, 12.344, 12.357, 15.282, 17.307, 23.357, *Odyssey* 3.129, 8.123, 9.420, 9.432, 13.297, 13.365, 15.253, 23.117, 24.429.

⁶⁹⁵ Λεπτός is also a meta-poetic term for 'slender' poetry, a common feature of Hellenistic poetry, and important to the Romans as well as *lepidus*.

But when we recuperated ourselves a little, then, after picking out four companions that were by far the best, I sent them onto the planet to go and investigate what sort of food-eating beings there were in the land, and whether they're wild minded, arrogant, and base, or friendly and kind-hearted; but not without weapons, as experience had taught us, since they all had excellent weapons in our pockets, the kind that sci-fi writers call 'phasers'. A large citadel with strange houses suddenly appeared to them, and they observed everything from afar⁶⁹⁶ whilst walking quickly. Many beings lived in the citadel that resembled humans, but weak, smaller, and thinner because the gravity was lighter than what presses upon Earthly men, but a certain grief seemed to control them all, they were weeping and wailing everywhere, constantly. They investigated more and established the rank of their technologies, which were inferior to our own, then they returned to the forest and our vessel, and now reported what they saw to me and my companions.

⁶⁹⁶ The Czech implies the use of a telescope (*dalekohledem*), n.b. the etymology of 'telescope' is from the same verb that's used here, *telescopio*.

- Ἀλλὰ δέ μοι φιλοπειστίη⁶⁹⁷ νυν ἄνωγε φίλον κῆρ
 τῶν ποτὶ ἄστρῳ ἵμεν καὶ πύθεσθαι περὶ λύπης.
 Βῆν ἵμεν ἄψ ποτὶ ἄστρῳ ἔγωγε σὺν ἰχθυησιν
 οὐ μὲν μῦθοι πέντε ἐπεὶ μευ ἄλλοι ἔποντο (60)
 Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων ῥόβοκοψ δέ τε Ἴβω
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ κίχομεν ξεῖνον καὶ αἰπὺ τὸ ἄστρῳ
 τῆμος ἐγὼ πρῶτον τόνδ' ἠῦρον φῶτα προσηύδων
 εἰρωτῶν κλαυθμοῦ αἰτίην ἢ γόοιο
 ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα. (65)
 Ἀλλὰ με λεπτὸς ἀνὴρ λυγροῖς τοι ἀμείβειτ' ἔπεσσι·
 «*Νήπιος εἶ ὧ ξεῖν' οὐ τηλόθεν εἰληλούθας*⁶⁹⁸
ὥς μέ νυ εἰρωτᾷς ἀρχὴν κλαυθμοῦ τε γόοιο
Πάντες μὲν γ' ἴδμεν ἢ γείτονες ἢ πολῖται
*ὥς δέομεν κατὰ ἡῶος κούρην ἱερῆσαι*⁶⁹⁹ (70)
δαίμονι Γρ-ργ-ρεῶ βασιλῆος ἡμετέροιο.
Τῆς ἀρχῆς ἔνεκεν κλαίουσιν ἄνδρες ἅπαντες
ἢ νέοι ἢ πολιοὶ ἰδὲ θήλειαι τε γυναῖκες.
Ἀλλ' οὐτις προῆξις· ἐπεὶ εἰ μὴ τήνδε δίδοιμεν
πάντηας μὲν Γργ-γρὸς δὲ ὀλήσειεν κακοδαίμων.» (75)
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ ἀστευὺς Φράντης μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.

⁶⁹⁷ = φιλεπιστήμων (φίλος + ἐπιστήμη) = φιλομάθεια; more of a love of scientific knowledge than learning through experience/study.

⁶⁹⁸ Echoes *Odyssey* 9.273-4 (νήπιός εἰς, ὧ ξεῖν', ἢ τηλόθεν εἰληλούθας, // ὅς με θεοὺς κέλειαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι: "You are a fool, stranger, or have come from afar, seeing that you bid me either to fear or to avoid the gods", [trans. Murray 1919, Loeb 104]): the opening line of Polyphemos' response to Odysseus request for *xenia*.

⁶⁹⁹ = ἱεράω, but this term isn't really used to mean 'sacrifice', but its root ἱερός can have the substantive meaning (cf. LSJ s.v. ἱερός III.1).

But my love of science now encouraged my dear heart to head to their city and learn about their grief. I went back with my scouts to the city, but not us five alone, since others followed me, such as Franta, my universal translator, and the robocop Ivo. But when we reached the strange and towering city, then I addressed the first man I found, asking him about the reason for the weeping and mourning, and then my universal translator Franta translated my words. But then the thin man replied to me in mournful words:

“You’re a fool, o alien, or you’ve come from far away, seeing that you’re currently asking me about the beginning of our weeping and mourning. We all know, both neighbours and citizens, that on the morrow we must sacrifice the daughter of our king to the demon Gr-rg-r.⁷⁰⁰ All the men are weeping or this reason, as well as the youths, the elderly, and the women. But there’s no solution, since if we don’t hand her over, then the evil demon Grg-gros would destroy us all.”

So the citizen spoke and Franta translated his speech.

⁷⁰⁰ This resembles the myth of Theseus with Ariadne and the Minotaur, also perhaps King Kong.

Μοὶ γὰρ ὥς ἤκουσα μὲν γήθησεν φίλον ἦτορ
 μῦθον γινώσκοντι τὸν ἀρχέτυπον καλέουσιν
 τῆς περὶ ἄρχουτος κούρης μεγάλου τε πέλωρος
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι αὐτίς γ' ὥτρυνεν θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ (80)
 τοὺς μὲν ἀλεξέμεναι κτάμεναι δέτε κνώδαλον αὐτό.
 Φῶτα πολίτην αὐτίς ἐγὼν ἥνωγον ἔπεσσι
 ἡγεμονεύεσθαι πρὸς ἄνακτος χαλκοβατὲς δῶ
 καὶ ἐμὲ καὶ ἐτάρους οἱ τοί γ' ἦσαν σὺν ἐμεῖο
 ὥς ὃδ' ἐπευφήμησεν ἀνὴρ καὶ ἦρξε ὁδοῖο. (85)
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν εἰς νῆα κάλησά ἐ ραδιοφώνῳ
 ἀγγείλων ἵμεναι ἅμε πρὸς χώρης βάσιλῃα.
 Τὸν κέχομεν μεγάρῳ· ἔδρη εἰν σιγαλοέσση
 ἀχνύμενον· μάλα γάρ μιν τείρετο μοῖρα θυγατρός.
 Τὸν μὲν ἐγὼν ἔπεσιν προηύδων ἀστείσισιν (90)
 δαίμονα λυγροφόρον κτάμεναί οἱ εὖ ὑποτείνων
 ῥῆϊδιως σαφέως ἰδὲ καὶ κούρην γε σαῶσαι.
 Ἀλλὰ γε σμερδαλέῳ με γέλω βασιλεὺς ἀποκρίθη
 καὶ μ' ὀλοφυρόμενος ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδα
 [Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων μετατίθετο πάντα] (95)
 «Νήπιος εἶ ὧ ξεῖν' οὐ τηλόθεν εἰληλούθας⁷⁰¹
 ὥς οἶεις Γργ-γρ-ρὸν ὄπλῳ κτάμεναι δυνάμεσθαι.

⁷⁰¹ Echoes *Odyssey* 9.273-4 (νήπιός εἰς, ὧ ξεῖν', ἢ τηλόθεν εἰληλούθας, // ὅς με θεοὺς κέλειαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι: "You are a fool, stranger, or have come from afar, seeing that you bid me either to fear or to avoid the gods", [trans. Murray 1919, Loeb 104]): the opening line of Polyphemus' response to Odysseus request for *xenia*.

But when I heard it, my dear heart rejoiced, since I recognised a myth that they call 'archetypal', namely concerning a ruler's daughter and a mighty monster,⁷⁰² and then my brave heart encouraged me to lend them aid and slay this very monster. I again ordered the citizen in a speech to lead both me and my companions who were there with me to the bronze-floored palace of his ruler, and so the man agreed and led the way. But I called my ship on my radiophone, announcing that we were going to visit the planet's king. Whom we encountered in a large hall, sat on magnificent throne, feeling grief, for the fate of his daughter troubled him greatly. Whom I addressed in polite words,⁷⁰³ promising him that I'd easily and assuredly kill the demon that's bringing him misery and save his daughter. But the king answered with an awful laugh and addressed me in winged words whilst grieving [my universal translator translated everything]:

"You're a fool, o alien, or you've come from far away, seeing that you think that you can kill Grg-gr-r with weaponry.

⁷⁰² See my note on the title of book 15.

⁷⁰³ Also 'charming, refined, elegant, witty'.

- Πολλάκι πειρήσαντ' ἄνδρες πολέες τε καὶ ἐσθλοὶ
 ἀλλὰ σφε κτάνε πάντας ἐπεὶ οὐ μόρσιμός ἐστι.⁷⁰⁴
 Πάντα δέ τοι ἐρέω ἐξανδᾶν θυμὸς ἀνώγει (100)
 ὥς καὶ μυθόμενος λεπτῶς θυμὸν κορέσαιμι.
 Ἀλλὰ γὰρ εἰν ἔδρησι ἔξεσθε τύνη καὶ ἑταῖοι
 ὄφρα γε νῦν ἐρέω λυγροῦ ἀρχὴν ὀλοφυρμοῦ.»
 Ἦ ῥα ἀνὴρ βασιλεύς μοι πείθετο θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ
 αὐτίκ' ἐγὼν ἐξόμην ἔδρη καὶ πάντας ἑταῖροι (105)
 ἀλλ' ἄ μ' ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς ἔπεα πρεποέοντα ἔειπεν·
 «Ἴσθί γε νῦν ὧ ζεῖνε τὰ ἡμετέρης περὶ λύπης
 ὄφρα λίπων χώρην λέξεις καὶ ἀλλοδαποῖσιν
 οὐδ' ἄρα τιν' ἀνθρώπον ἐγὼν ἔμεναί περ οἴω
 ὃς τῷ Γργ-ργ-γρῶ δυνάσαιο νικητὰ μάχεσθαι. (110)
 Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐθέλω πειράζεσθαι σε καὶ ἄλλους
 Γργ-ργ-γρὸν μῶσθαι κτάμεναι· σάος αἶπὺς ὄλεθρος.
 Μούνως τοι ἐρέω σύδε σύνθεο εἰν φρεσὶ τῇσιν.
 Καὶ ἄλλοι μὲν εἰσιν ἐνὶ σκιοέσσιν ὄρεσσιν
 θῆρες ὡς Γργ-ρξ ἄλλ' οὔτι κακὸν γε ποιοῦσιν (115)
 βρώσκοντες⁷⁰⁵ βοτάνην· ἕνα τῶνδ' ἄνδρες ἐποίησαν
 πυγμαῖοι ὡς πῆμα κακὸν νῦν ἄμμι τέτυκτο.

⁷⁰⁴ cf. *Iliad* 22.13 (οὐ μὲν με κτενέεις, ἐπεὶ οὐ τοι μόρσιμός εἰμι.
 “You will not slay me, since I am not one appointed to die” [trans.
 Murray 1925, Loeb 171], Apollo to Achilles.

⁷⁰⁵ = βόσκω (?)

Many fine men have often tried, but he killed them all since he's not fated to die. I will tell you everything, since my heart urges me to speak out so that my speaking about it I might satisfy my heart a little. But you and your companions should sit on the benches, so that I can now tell you about the beginning of our mournful lamentation."

So the king spoke, and my brave heart obeyed, all my companions and I immediately sat down on the benches, but then the king told me this in winged words:

"Know now, o alien, the events concerning our grief, so that when you leave our land you may also tell it to alien peoples, since I don't think that there is any person who could fight with Grg-rg-gr and win. For I don't want you and others to try and seek to kill Grg-rg-gr: it certainly means utter destruction. I shall only tell you this, and you should keep it in mind. There are others also in the thickly wooded mountains, animals like Grg-rg, but they do nothing evil, grazing on grass. Pygmies made one of them now become an evil cause of mischief for us.

- Εἰσὶ δὲ πυγμαῖοι ἄνδρες χαλεποὶ ἐνὶ χώρῃ
αἰὲν ἀνθρώποις νόμιμοις ἔριδα προφέροντες
οὐκ ἐπιτήδαιοι ὥς μικροὶ ἱφί μάχεσθαι (120)
ἀλλὰ δὲ παντοίους γε δόλους θυμοῖσι ὕφαινον.
Οὗτος καὶ πύματος δόλος ἦν ἡμᾶς ὀλέσασθαι.
Ἰσθι δὲ ὥς Γργ-ρξ καὶ τούτου προσήκοντες
τοὺς μὲν ἡμετέρῃ γλώσσει χρχλὰς καλέουμεν
ὅσ τε α οὐτὶν ἔχουσὶ τε καὶ εἰσὶν πολὺμορφοι⁷⁰⁶ (125)
μορφὰς παντοδαπὰς καὶ χρώματα αἰὲν ἔχοντες
καὶ ἀλλασσόμενοι αἰὲν ὥς τοὺς ἐπέοικεν
οἷ δε ρα καὶ δύναμιν τρώγλας ἤλθειν διὰ μικρὰς
παντοίας μὲν ἔχουσιν ἐπεὶ στερεοὶ οὐκ ἔασιν
χρχλαὶ δύσμορφοι· μάλα πλαστικὰ θηρία ἐστίν. (130)
Τὸν χρχλὴν εἴ τις κάτα δ' ἔτμεσεν ὀξεί χαλκῷ
αὐτίκα ἐξ μούνῳ δὴ θηρία καινὰ⁷⁰⁷ τέτυκτο
Εἴ κέν τις χρχλὴν τμέσε ἔλκος πικρὸν ἀνύων
αὐτίκα πύκνωσεν δέ τ' ἀσκηθὲς κνώδαλον ἔσκεν
οὐ χρχλὴν κτάμεναί τις πρῆξις σὺν πυρὶ κήλῳ·⁷⁰⁸ (135)

⁷⁰⁶ The name 'polymorph' to me immediately evokes season 3 episode 3 of *Red Dwarf*, "Polymorph" (28 Nov. 1989) and season 6 episode 4, "Emohawk: Polymorph II" (28 Oct. 1993), in which a shapeshifting alien feeds on the crew's emotions. However, Křesadlo's son Václav Z. J. Pinkava couldn't confirm for me whether his father was familiar with the show. cf. note on *Astr.* 5.325.

⁷⁰⁷ Καινός is a novelty marker.

⁷⁰⁸ = κήλεος.

The pygmies on this planet are hostile, always bringing strife to us ordinary men. They are not fitted with the strength necessary for battle since they're small, but they weave all kinds of tricks in their hearts instead. And so they had a final trick to destroy us. Know now, that Grg-rg and his relatives, whom we call in our language 'chrchls', have no bones and are shapeshifters, always possessing all kinds of forms and complexions, and always shifting as it suits them, they also have the power to pass through all sorts of tiny holes because these misshapen chrchls possess nothing solid: they are very malleable beasts.⁷⁰⁹ If someone cut down the chrchl with sharp bronze, then two new beasts would promptly be born from the one.⁷¹⁰ If someone should successfully cut a painful wound on a chrchl, then it would immediately mend it, and the brute would remain unscathed.

⁷⁰⁹ This description of a shapeshifting alien is very open to meta-literary analysis and relates back to the theme of translation that we have seen throughout the *Astronautilia*. Literature is a very *plastic* art, for example, Lucian calls himself a *peloplatthos* ('potter', from the verb πλάσσω) (*You're a Literary Prometheus* 1).

⁷¹⁰ Like the Lernaean Hydra, every time a head is cut off, two more grow from the stump (Lucian *Phalaris* 1.8, *Anacharsis* 35, Seneca *Medea* 701-702, Euripides *Heracles* 1274-1275, Horace *Odes* 61-62, Lucan *Civil War* 634-635, Philo *on Dreams* 2.14, Ovid *Metamorphoses* 192-193). One of Hercules' labours.

- φλέγμα δέ τ' ἐξυδροῦν⁷¹¹ δύναται ψυχρὸν θαλερόν τε
 ῥηϊδίως σβέσσαι τὸ πυρὸς μένος οὐ δυνατόν περ
 πῦρ μέγα ποίεσθαι ὥς τῷ καὶ ἄστυ ὄλοιτο
 οὕτως χρχλαὶ θῆρες ἀσκηθέες εἰσι μάχεσθαι.⁷¹²
 Ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ θῆρες κούφως πνίγουσιν ὀπλίτας (140)
 ἄμφι τὸ σῶμα βάλλον φωτὸς ὥς πνίξεται αὐτός.
 Ναὶ χαλεποὶ εἰσιν χρχλαὶ ἀνδράσσι μάχεσθαι.
 Ἀλλὰ γέ τοι χρχλαὶ νόμιμοι ἀπονόσφι ναίουσιν
 οὐδὲ τε δ' ἀνθρώπους περ ἔπεισιν οὐδὲ τι ἄλλο
 τρώουσιν βοτάνην καὶ ἥσυχά θηρία ἐστίν. (145)
 Ἀλλὰ γε πυγμαῖοι ἔνα πῆμα κακὸν ἐποίησαν
 αὐτὸν Γργ-ργ-γὸν πυκινοῖς σφετεροῖσι δόλοισιν.
 Ἴσθι δὲ νῦν ὧ ζεῖν' ὥς χρχλαὶ θῆρες ἀεικεῖς
 ἀλλήλοισι μίγνυνται ἕως καὶ θηρία ἄλλα
 γίνεσθαι γίνειν τε γένος φύσεος κατὰ κόσμον (150)
 ἀλλὰ γε χρχλαὶ θῆρες ἐν ἀλλήλοῖς γε φύουσιν
 μῦνον θῆρά τε τεύχονται πρὶν αὐτε λύσεσθαι.
 Εἰ μὲν τις χρχλῆς ἀνθρώπῳ ταῦτα ποιήσει
 τόνδε βροτὸν κτεῖνοι αὐτὸν πνίξας ἐνὶ σαρκί.
 Καὶ νῦν αἰσθάνου πυγμαίων σχέτλια ἔργα· (155)
 Κούρην μὲν κλέψαν νομίμην προγόνων νομίμων τε
 τῇδε δόσαν μικρὸν χρχλοῦ βρέφος τιθήνεσθαι.⁷¹³

⁷¹¹ Obscure, probably a verbal form of ἐξυδρίας.

⁷¹² Notably, the hydra *could* be defeated by fire (Euripides *Hercules* 419-424), whereas a chrchl cannot.

⁷¹³ = τιθηνέω.

Nor is there any way of killing a chrchl with burning fire: it can shower phlegm that's cold and thick to easily extinguish the life of the fire, nor is it possible to make a great fire, since the city would perish from it, and so the chrchl beasts remain unscathed in battle. But the beasts themselves can easily suffocate warriors by throwing its body around a man so that he chokes. Yes, these chrchls are difficult for men to fight. But ordinary chrchls, on the other hand, dwell far from us, and they don't attack humans or any other creature, they munch on grass and are gentle beasts. But the pygmies have made one an evil cause of mischief, this very Grg-rg-ga, using their cunnings tricks. Know now, o alien, that these deadly chrchls mingle with each other like other beasts also do to procreate and produce a genus of their species according to the natural order, but the chrchls also grow into one another and become a single beast before they break apart again. If some chrchl did these things to a human, then this mortal would die himself by suffocating in his body. Now also learn the pygmies' wretched deeds: they have stolen an ordinary girl from ordinary parents and have given her to tend one of the chrchl's tiny whelps as a nurse.

- Καὶ ὅποτ' ἤβησεν χρῆλ' οὐ βρέφος κουροτιθηθὲς
 οὐκ ἄλλοις χρῆλ' ἔλθ' ὀργῇσι μιγῆναι
 μούνως ἀλλὰ γυναιξὶ φέρον σφισὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν (160)
 ὥς πυκνοῖσι δόλοισι πυγμαῖοι ἄνδρες ἔτυζαν
 Γρ-ργ-ρόν γ' ὅλοδ' ἐπέμψαν ἡμῖν ποτὶ ἄστυ.»
 – Ταῦτα ἀκουσάμενος πίστευσα ἐπεὶ σάφα οἶδα
 ἴσ' ἔμεναι γαίῃ σὺν θηρσὶν παμπόλλοισιν
 “ἱμπριντιγγ” ἄνδρες ἐζωόλογοι καλέουσιν (165)
 τῶν βρυθάνων μύθῳ ὥς ἦθος εἰν ἐπιστήμη –
 «Ἀλλὰ γε Γρ-ργ-γρὸς οἴστρησεν μηνὶ ἐκάστῳ
 ἡμετέρου λαοῦ αἰὲν μίην κτάνε κούρην.
 ὥς κτενέει ἡμῖν πάσας κούρας τε γυναικας
 ἀλλ' ὥς οὔτις πρῆξις ἀλῶσαι κνώδαλον αἰσχρόν (170)
 κλήρω τὴν κούρην αὐτοὶ ἔκ κρίνομεν αὐτῶ.
 Ὑστάτιον κλῆρος μὲν ἐμήν τοι κρῖνε θύγατρα
 – τούτῳ ἰσόνομοι πάντες δ' ἔσμεν ἐνὶ χώρῃ
 ἢ βασιλεὺς ἢ μὲν κοινὸς ἢ θῆς δὲ πένης τε.
 Ἀλλὰ μὲν εἴωθεν τὸ πέλωρ αἰσχρόν ἐφουνήσει.» (175)
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ βασιλεὺς θαλερὸν κατεΐβετο δάκρυ.

And when the chrchl's whelp that was being nursed by the girl reached puberty, he didn't want to mingle in passion with other chrchls, but only with women, and inflicts black death on them, thus the pygmies fashioned the destructive Gr-rg-r with their cunnings tricks and sent him towards our city."

– I believed these things once I'd heard them since I knew with certainty that there's the same thing on Earth with all kinds of animals, zoologists call it 'imprinting' in the language of the Britons as is customary in science –

"But Grg-rg-gros is driven mad each month and always kills a single girl from our people. So he'll kill all our girls and women, but since there's no way of avoiding this disgraceful brute, we single out the girl ourselves by lot. The most recent lot chose my daughter – we are all equal on this planet in this way, be he a king, a common man, or even a poor hired labourer. But the disgraceful monster will kill her as he's customed to do."

So the king spoke, and was flooded with frequent tears.

- Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέφη·ν ἐπέεσσιν.
 «θάρσσο νῦν βασιλεῦ οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτι δάκρυα λείβειν
 ὥς ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐρῆϊδίως κτάμεναι δυνάμεσθα
 οὐ πυρὶ οὐ χαλκῷ οὐδ' αὖ νηλῇι χαλύβδῳ (180)
 ἀλλὰ γε τέχνησιν τὰς ἐξῶται ἔχομέν περ.
 Τοὶ γὰρ νῦν δείξω ὧς μοι πεπιστευμένος εἴης.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην καὶ φειῶρον ἐρυσσάμενος ἀπὸ κάψης
 βῆν ἵμεν πρὸς θηρὶν⁷¹⁴ μῆν δέ τε καὶ μιν ἀνοίγνυν
 καὶ δὲ καταντικρὺ στειγέσματι⁷¹⁵ ἦεν οἰωνὸς (185)
 τὸν μὲν ἐπιχθονίη γε περιστερῇ ἐγγὺς εἴσκω.
 Τὸν δὲ βάλον φείσῳ ὅδ' ἄφαντος ἔφω διαφαίνων.
 Τὸν εἰδὼς βασιλεὺς ἀναΐξατο⁷¹⁶ γηθόσυνος κῆρ
 καὶ τὴν μὲν κούρην ἤλθειν μεγάρονδε ἄνωγεν
 τῆς ἔνεκέν γ' ἄλλον δὲ βάλον εἰν πύργῳ οἰωνόν. (190)
 θαρβήσασα⁷¹⁷ κόρη γέλασεν καὶ κρούετο χερσί.
 Οὕτως γηθόσυνοι βασιλεὺς καὶ εἶό τε κούρη
 ἡμῖν νῦν εἶπον κατ' ἐπαύρια ἔργα ἅπαντα.
 Ἥμεῖς μὲν πρὸς νῆα θοὴν νοστήσαμεν ἄνδρες
 τῇδ' ἀναπαυσέμεναι ἰδὲ καὶ σίτοιο πάσσασθαι (195)
 σώματα κλυζέμεναι καὶ πρηξέμεναι γλυκὺν ὕπνον
 οὕτως εὐδόμενοι μὲν ἐμείναμεν ἡόα διᾶν.

⁷¹⁴ = θυρίς.

⁷¹⁵ = στέγη.

⁷¹⁶ = ἀναΐσσω.

⁷¹⁷ = τέρπω (τέρψασα: aorist act. participle fem. nom. sing.?)

Then I replied to him in a speech:

“Take courage now, king, there’s no need to shed tears, since we are able to kill it easily, not with fire or bronze, nor with pitiless steel, but with the technologies that we aliens possess. For I shall now demonstrate to you that you can trust me.”

So I spoke, and drawing my phaser from my pocket, I approached a single window and opened it, and opposite there was an ominous bird on the roof that I could compare to something like a dove on Earth. Whom I shot with my phaser, and it vanished, becoming transparent. When the king saw this, he leapt up with a joyful heart and ordered that his daughter come to the great hall, because of this, I shot another ominous bird on a tower. The delighted girl laughed and clapped her hands. And so the king and his daughter joyfully told us now about all the things that would happen tomorrow. We men returned to our swift ship to rest in it and have some food, as well as wash our bodies and enjoy sweet sleep, and so we waited for the bright dawn as we slept.

Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠὼς
[ξεινιακή· οὐ πως τῇ ἡμετέρῃ εὐκυῖα]
 βῆμεν ἵμεν ποτὶ ἄστρ' ἐγὼ σὺν ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν (200)
 σὺν Ἴβωι ῥοβότῳ παγγλώσῳ καὶ ἰδὲ Φράντῃ.
 Ἀλλὰ γε εἰν ἀγορῇ ἤγερθεν πουλὺς ὄμιλος
 λαὼν μυρομένων ἡχὴ δ' ἦν δάκρυ χεόντων.
 Ἦν δέ τ' ἐκεῖ μέγα δῶ ἱρῶ τινι ἦεν εἰκοῶς
 ἔμπροσθεν νηοῦ τοι ξεῖνοι ἄνδρες ἔστηκαν (205)
 εἵμασι μὲν μέλασιν καὶ κῤῥα κεκαρμένοι ἦσαν.
 Αὐτίκα σάλπιγγας ἠκούσαμεν σαλπίζάντων
 καὶ τότε νῦν ἦγ' οὐ κούρην ποτὶ νηὸν ὀπλῖται
 καὶ ὁ πατήρ βασιλεὺς ἔπετ' αὐτὸς ἀχνύμενος κῆρ.
 Ἐν μὲν τῷ τέμενει παῦσεν πομπὴ πολύλυγρος (210)
 καὶ κούρην ἱερῆς ἔδησαν τῆς ἐπὶ στήλης.
 Ἄσβεστος τε βαρὺς κλαυθμὸς δέ τ' ἄνωρτο ὀμίλου
 ὥς μὲν ἄνασσαν ἴδον ῥα δεδημέναι ἐνὶ στήλῃ.
 Τοῖσιν μύθων ἦρξεν ἀνὴρ ἱερεὺς ὅχ' ἄριστος
 καὶ μὲν τὸν λαὸν προσέφη ἰδὲ καὶ βασιλῆα (215)
(αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα)·

When dawn appeared fresh and rosy-fingered [a strange one, not like ours at all], my companions and I approached the city, along with Ivo the robot and multilingual Franta. But then a large crowd of weeping people gathered in the forum, and there was the noise of their shedding tears. And there was a large palace there that resembled a kind of temple, in front of the temple stood strange men in black robes and with their heads shaved. Suddenly we heard the blowing of trumpets, and then soldiers now led the girl to the temple and her regal father himself followed with a grieving heart. The very mournful procession stopped in the temple and the priests tied the girl to a pillar.⁷¹⁸ An unquenchable and heavy weeping arose amongst the throng when they saw that their princess was tied up on the pillar. The priest, the most important by far, began speaking to them and addressed the people and the king (but my translator Franta translated his words):

⁷¹⁸ This description is reminiscent of King Kong.

- «Πικρὸν νῦν βασιλεῦ κούρην τειὴν ἱερεῦσαι
καὶ τοι καὶ λαῶ ἰδὲ καὶ ἡμῖν ἱερεῦσιν.
Ἄλλ' οὐτίς πρῆξις γε θεῶν τὸ θέλημα ἀλῦξαι.
Εἰ μὴ Γργ-ργ-γρὸς εἶχεν κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον (220)
μίην κουράων χαλεπὸν τι τύχης' ἐνὶ χώρῃ
ὄμβρος γὰρ παύσει παύσει λάχανόν τε θαλῆσαι
εἰς τέλος ἡέλιος γ' αὐτὸς παύσει ἀναδδῦναι
τοῦνεκα εὖ κούρην γε χαριστιακῶς⁷¹⁹ ἀπόδοιμεν
δαίμονι Γργ-ργ-γρῶ ὥς ἄμμι ὄλεθρον ἀμῦναι.» (225)
Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ ἱερεὺς καὶ ἐμοί γε χόλος ἔλε θυμὸν
εἰδοῖτι τὸν γε φένακ' αἰσχρὸν μαλακὸν δέ τ' ἄνακτα
ὃς μὲν οἶδε σαφῶς μοῦνον τό γε θηρίον εἶναι
πυγματοῖσι διδακτὸν ἐπεὶ κούρας πνίξαιτο (230)
ἀλλὰ δεδοικῶς μὲν λαὸν ἄνοον ἀπόπληκτον
τὴν ἑάσεν κούρην αὐτοῦ κτάμεναι ἀπὸ θηρὸς
εἰ μὴ μὲν γε τύχη ἠνεγκεί' ἀστροπορεύτας.
Οἱ δέ τ' ἔπειτά γε σάλπιγξαν σαλπικτῆρες ἐνὶ πομπῇ
καὶ ἱερεῖς φαῦλοι θύραν νηοῖο ἄνοιγον.
Ἔκ μέγα ἄλτο πέλωρ μορφῇσιν ἀμειβομένησιν (235)
ἥμισυ ὥς πολύπους καὶ ἥμισυ ὥς ἑλεφάς τε
αἰσχρόν· ἦδε κόρη ἔλιποψύχησεν ἰδοντα.

⁷¹⁹ = χαριστικός.

“It is a bitter thing, king, to now sacrifice your daughter, to the people as well as to us priests. But there is no way of avoiding the will of the gods. If Grg-rg-gros did not receive a single girl each month, some terrible thing would happen in this land, for the rain would stop and vegetables would stop blooming. Finally, the sun itself will stop rising, which is why we must give up the girl with good grace to the demon Grg-rg-gr so that we can defend ourselves from destruction.”

So the priest spoke and bitter anger seized my mind, for I knew that this man was a shameless quack and a feeble lord who knows for a fact that it's only an animal taught by the pygmies to strangle girls. But being afraid of the thoughtless stupid people, he allowed his own daughter to be killed at the beast's hand, if fate had not brought us astronauts here. But then the trumpeters in the procession blew their trumpets and the base priests opened the gates to the temple. The mighty monster leapt out with changing form, half like an octopus and half like an elephant, hideous, and the girl fainted when she saw it.

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ φεῖσρον τάχ' ἐρυσσάμενος ἀπὸ κάψης
 ῥίμφα πέλωρα βάλον ἀκτίνης οὐλομένησιν.
 Βλήμενος ἐξαπίνης διεφήνατο ἡϋτ' ὀμίχλη (240)
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντον ἔφνυ τὸ πέλωρ καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκεν.
 Πάντες βλέψαντες μὲν ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ
 ἀλλὰ γε τοῖς ἱερεὺς κορυφαῖος ἤρξε γόοιο
 κρᾶτά γε κρονόμενος (*χαίτας οὐκ εἶχε τίλεσθαι*)
 – ἀλλὰ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα – (245)
 «ὦ ποποῖ ὡς ξεῖνος κτάνε δαίμονα ζωοδοτῆρα
 πρόφρονα Γργ-γρ-γρὸν ὅς τ' ἡμῖν ὄμβρον ὄπαζεν
 καὶ ἄλλα τοῦ βιότου μὲν ἐρείσματα χρήματα πάντα
 ἦ κτάνε ἦ ἐποίησε λίπειν αὐτὸ κλυτὸν ἄστυ
 λαῶν ἡμετέρων ἄμι νῦν σάος αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.» (250)
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ ἱερῶν καὶ ἐμοὶ χόλος εἶλε φίλον κῆρ
 αἴοντι τὸ ψεῦσμα κακὸν φαῦλόν τε σόφισμα
 καὶ μιν ἀμειβόμενος ἔπεα πτερυέοντα προσηύδων
 (*ἀλλὰ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα*).
 «Ψεύδεις ὦ ἱερεῦ ὡς φῆς τὸ πέλωρ θεὸν⁷²⁰ εἶναι (255)
 καὶ ὀπάσαι ὄμβρον καὶ πρόφρονα οὐρανὸν ὑμῖν.

⁷²⁰ The presence (or more, absence) of gods in the *Astronautilia* is very interesting to follow. The 'gods' that we see in person in the epic tend to be ordinary creatures that are worshipped *as* gods, but are also implied *not* to be *real* gods. (Oudeis and his crew themselves have even been worshipped as gods because of their superior technology).

But I quickly drew a phaser from my pocket, and swiftly shot the monster with destructive rays. Once hit, he immediately became transparent like a mist, and then the monster became invisible and was no more. They all silently became quiet when they beheld this, but their chief priest began wailing, and striking his head (he did not have hair to pull out) – but our translator Franta translated his words –

“Oh alas! Since this alien has slain the life-giving demon, the kindly Grg-rg-gr, who sends us rain and all the other things that support life, he has either killed it or made it leave our glorious city itself, away from our people, we will certainly now face utter destruction!”

So the priest spoke, and bitter anger seized my dear heart since I realised that it was a pernicious lie, base and tricky, and I replied to him in winged words (but my translator Franta translated my words):

“You’re lying, o priest, since you say that the monster is a god and sends you rain and a gracious climate.

Τὸν μὲν πυγμαῖοι φιλέειν κούρας δεδάακαν
 λαὸν σὸν ὀλέσαι κτάμεναι πάσας τε γυναῖκας
 καινοτέρας αἱ μὲν γίγνεσθαι τέκνα δύναιντο
 καὶ γε βάδην τε βάδην (260)

ἄτοκον μέγα ἄστν ποίεισθαι.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ τῆς σῆς ψυχῆς μὲν ἐπίσταμαι αὐτὸς
 ὥς τε θέλεις ὀλέσαι ἴδιον λαὸν γενέην τε.
 ἦ μὲν πυγμαῖοί τοι ἀγλαὰ χρήματ' ἔδωκαν
 ἠὲ κότον πικρόν περ ἔχεις φρεσὶ λαῶ ἅπαντι
 ὥς προδότης τετύκον ἰδίου λαοῦ τε φέναξ τε.» (265)

ᾧ εἰς ἐφάμην ὅ με δ' αὖτις ἀμείβετο νηλεῖ θυμῷ·
 (ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα)
 «Σχέτλιος εἶ ὃ ξεινέ τε καὶ μανικὸς μαυκώδης⁷²¹
 ὥς ὑπο μὲν γ' ὀλέσας θεῖον καὶ ἀμύμονα θῆρα
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς τοι πρῆξις ἐφαύνετο χρήματα στρέψαι (270)

οὐδ' ἔτι τοι λαὸς πιστεύσει ξείνῳ ἐόντι
 ὥς μὲν ἐγὼ πάντας κρατέω περ ἐμοῖς ἐπέεσσιν·
 οὐδ' ἔτι τις πρῆξις ἔσεται σοι καὶ βασιλῆι
 ὥς γὰρ πυγμαῖοί γε νέην κλέψουσι κόραυναν
 ἦ καὶ θῆρα νέον θεῖον διδαχῆς θέμα θήσιν (275)
 τὰς φιλέειν κούρας πάσας κτάμεναί τε γυναῖκας
 παντοίου λαοῦ· τόδε τοῖς πάντεσσιν ὀφέλλει
 ὥς τέ μέγ' εὐνούχισαν ἐμοῖς σὺν πᾶσιν ἐταίροις.

⁷²¹ Seems to be an agent noun formed from μωκίζω (i.e., μωκάομαι), hence 'jester, mocker, imposter, clown'.

The pygmies taught him to love girls to destroy your people by killing all your younger women who could produce children and gradually your mighty city would little-by-little be made childless. For I myself do not understand your psyche, that you want to destroy your own people and race. Either the pygmies have bribed you with glorious money, or you have an embittered grudge against your entire people, so you have become a traitor to your own people and a cheat.”

So I spoke, and he replied to me with a pitiless mind (but my translator Franta translated everything):

“You are relentless, o alien, and a crazy clown, since you have destroyed a divine and blameless animal, but regardless, no solution shall reveal itself to you to turn these things around, nor shall the people believe you since you’re an alien, because I hold power over them all with my words. Neither you nor the king shall have any course of action, for the pygmies will steal a new girl, or will even dedicate a new divine animal to their cause by teaching it to love all girls and kill women from all sorts of peoples. This is owed to all people, since they’ve completely castrated me and all my companions.

*Νῦν γε βάδην τε βάδην φθίσονται ἄτερ γενέης περ
 ὥς καὶ ἐγὼν εὐνοῦχος ἐὼν ἄλλοι τ' ἱεῖρες. (280)
 Ἀλλὰ οὐ τοι ῥώμη τάδε πάντα πάλιν ἀναλῦσαι.
 Νῆπιοί εἰσιν πάντες ἐν ἅσπεϊ καὶ εὐπιστοι
 πάντα τὰ τοῖς μὲν ἔφην περ ἐγὼ ἱερεῖς τε καὶ ἄλλοι.
 Οὐ καὶ νῦν περ ἐπιστάαται τὰ ἅ τοι ἀγορεύω
 καὶ περ ἀληθέ' ἐόντα ἐπεὶ ἀποφώλιοί εἰσιν. (285)
 Μοῦνος μὲν βασιλεὺς γνώμην ἔχει ἢ νόημα
 ἀλλὰ γ' ὁ καὶ μαλακὸς καὶ ἀνάγκιμος καὶ φοβερός τε
 ταύτην τήνδε πόλιν κρατέουμεν μὲν τερῆες.»
 Ὡς φάτο ὑβρίζων καὶ ἐμὸν ὥτρυνε φίλον κῆρ
 καὶ μιν ἀμειβόμενος ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδων· (290)
 «Τέθναθι φαῦλ' ἱερεῦ προδοτῆρ λαοῦ ἰδίοιο
 αὐτὸς καὶ σὺν τοι ἄλλοι ἱερεῖς ἐταῖροι.
 Οὐδ' ἄρα τοι νῦν φημι κακώτερον ἄλλο γένεσθαι
 ἢ ὥς τις δ' αὐτοῦ πάτρην ἐχθροῖς προδιδοίη
 ἢ κέρδους ἔνεκεν ἢ καὶ γε τιμωρίας τε (295)
 οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ νοέω λαὸν μωρόν τοι ἔσεσθαι
 δὴν τῆμος τοῖσιν περὶ θηρὸς πάντα ἐνίσπω
 ἢ ἐγὼ ἢ βασιλεύς· σύ τέθναθι φαυλότατος φώς.»*

Now they shall gradually dwindle little-by-little, without offspring, since the other priests and I are eunuchs. But you have no power to undo all these things again. They're all fools in the city, as well quick to believe everything that the other priests and I tell them. And they do not now understand what I am telling you, even though it's true, since they're useless. The king alone possesses the resolve and understanding, but he is also soft and impotent and timid, which is why we priests rule this city." ⁷²²

So he spoke arrogantly, and my dear heart stirred me up, and I replied to him in winged words:

"Die, you worthless priest, you traitor to your own people, and the other fellow priests along with you! But I am not telling you now that anything worse can happen than someone betraying his own homeland to his enemies, either for the sake of profit or even for revenge. I don't even think that your people shall stay stupid for long when either I or the king shall tell them all about the beast: die now you most worthless man!"

⁷²² People of ideological authority using their ideology to exploit the 'stupid' masses feeds into Křesadlo's anti-communist sentiment.

- Ὡς εἶπων φεῖσρόν γ' ἐρύσας κάνης παρὰ μηροῦ
 καὶ στόχον αὐτε ἔλων ἔβαλον φαῦλον ἱερῆα (300)
 ἄλλους ὠτρυνον δέ τ' ἐμοὺς ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
 τοὺς ἄλλους βαλέμεν ἱερῆας καὶ κτάμεναί τε.
 Βλήμενοι ἐξαπίνης διεφάναντ' ἡῦτ' ὁμίχλη
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντοι ἔφυν φῶτες καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκον.
 Ἀλλὰ ὃ γ' ἀρχιερεὺς φαῦλος γινῶ ἢ οἱ ἦσαν (305)
 λαοὶ εἰν ἄστει καὶ ἀσφαλέον φάτο μῦθον.
 Ὡς μὲν τοὺς ἱερῆας ἅμες κτάμεν ἡὲ πέλωρον
 καὶ κούρην κοράμιον ἐσαώσαμεν ὡς ἐπέοικεν
 τὴν ἰδίην τὴν περ κλαίοντ' ὡς νήπια τέκνα
 σμερδαλέῃ ἰαχῇ μὲν αἶξαν νῦν ποτὶ ἡμᾶς (310)
 ἀρπάξαι μεμαόντες ἐπεὶ κτάμεν οἷσι πέλωρον
 ὅς μὲν σφίν γ' ἐπέιωθε θύγατρας πνίξαι ἀψύχας.
 Πάμπολλοι ἦσαν ἡμῖν φεῖσροι δέ τε παῦροι
 οὐ δὴν φεισρομένοισι γόμωσις εἰσάρκοιτο
 πολλῶν ἐρχομένων· ἐγγὺς ἦν αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.⁷²³ (315)
 Ταῦτα λογίζομενοί γε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν
 ἥρξαμεν ἐκ πόλεος φεύγειν τάχα καὶ τρεχέεσθαι
 ἄλλ' Ἴβω ρόβοκοψ αἰσχροὺς κρατεροὺς πολεμιστῆς
 τήνδε φυγὴν ἡμῖν κρύψεν φεῖσροις ὀλοεῖσι
 ὡς οὐ μὲν σαρκὸς ὁ πολυκμήτου τε σιδήρου (320)
 στίλβων καὶ στερεὸς χαλεπὸς δ' ὄπλοισι μάχεσθαι.

⁷²³ cf. *Astr.* 3.141-2.

So I was speaking, whilst also drawing my phaser from the pocket by my thigh, and having chosen my target, I shot the worthless priest and encouraged the rest of my trusty companions to shoot the rest of the priests and kill them. Those that had been hit immediately became transparent like a mist, and the men disappeared and were no more. But the worthless chief priest knew well that the people in the city were like and uttered a precautionary threat: That since we killed the priests and the monster, and when we saved the king's daughter, as was fitting, the same girl whom they were weeping for like silly little children, they shall now dart towards us with a fearful cry in an attempt to take us captive since we killed the monster who was accustomed to suffocating their daughters until they're lifeless. There were very many of them, and we had too few phasers, and there wouldn't be enough ammunition to reload the phasers whilst the multitude was on its way – utter destruction was close at hand. Taking these things into account in our minds and in our hearts, we began to flee from the city and ran quickly, but Ivo, the infamously powerful warrior, concealed our escape with his deadly phasers, since he wasn't made of living flesh but was elaborately wrought from iron, flashing and solid, and difficult to fight against with weapons.

Πολλοῖσιν κτάμενοις ρόβοτος λαῶ ἔλε μῆνιν
 ρίμφ' αὐτὸς τροχέων νόστησέν γ' ἄψ ποτὶ νῆα.
 Ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἔνωρτο γέλως ἄλλοις ἐτάροισιν
 ὡς ταῦτοις περὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν πάντων δέ τ' ἔλεξα. (325)

Οὕτως τις δ' εἶπεσκεν ἴδων εἰς πλήσιον ἄλλον·
 «ὦ ποποῖ πλοίαρχος Οὐδεὶς θέλε φαίδιμα⁷²⁴ ῥέξαι
 θηρέσι μάρνασθαι κούρην κοράμην μὲν ἀμῦναι
 καὶ κλέος καὶ κούρην καὶ ἥμισυ τῆς βασιλείης
 κτᾶσθαι ἀριστεύων ὡς εἰν βίβλοισι γέγραπται. (330)

Ἀλλὰ δέ γ' ἐ σφῆλαν χαλεποὶ φαῦλοι δέ τε ἄνδρες
 μωροὶ καὶ ἀγενεῖς ἀρπακτῶρες⁷²⁵ τε κύνες τε.
 ὡς μὲν ὕπαρ μύθου αἶεν φανλώτερον ἔστι.»⁷²⁶

Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ἔταροι ἀναλήψαντ'⁷²⁷ ἐκ δὲ γέλωτος
 νῆα μὲν εὐξέστην ἐπιβήσαμεν ἡδεῖ θυμῷ (335)
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου χειρῶν τ' ἀνδρῶν ἀχαρίστων.

Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες.
 Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 ζητοῦντές γε ὁδὸν πρὸς κόσμου γείτονα χώραν. (340)

⁷²⁴ Usually used alongside names in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

⁷²⁵ = ἀρπακτῆρ.

⁷²⁶ Homily/sententia, trying to present the *Astronautilia* as being more realistic. Realism is a key aspect of later epic, such as Apollonius of Rhodes' inclusion of contemporary medical knowledge in the *Argonautica*. The writers of the second sophistic such as Lucian were also preoccupied with achieving realism, part of the realism here is subverting the traditional archetypes and breaking the illusion of a nostalgic vision of how things *should* play out.

⁷²⁷ = ἀναλαμβάνω.

With many people slain, the robot stole the people's wrath, and, running, returned to the ship himself. And then unquenchable laughter arose amongst the rest of my companions when I told them all about these men. And so some man would speak whilst looking at his neighbour:

"Oh alas! Our ship's captain Oudeis wants to accomplish glorious deeds by fighting with beats and defending a princess and procuring fame and a maiden and half of a kingdom by being the best, as is written in books.⁷²⁸ But the savage and worthless men have tripped him up, they're idiots, ignoble, robbers, and dogs.⁷²⁹ And so, reality is always more prosaic than fiction."

But when my companions recovered from their laughter, we boarded our well-constructed ship with a pleasant mind, glad to have escaped death as well as the hands of charmless men. The rocket immediately propelled our beautifully constructed ship and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind. From there we sailed through the depths of the cosmos, seeking a way through the neighbouring tract of the universe.

⁷²⁸ i.e., the archetypal way that this kind of myth resolves.

⁷²⁹ i.e., 'shameless'.

Book II

*[Τῶν ροβότων ἀπανάστασις. Ἡ τοῦ Φράντον παράνοια
καὶ ἀνάκτησις]*

Οὕτως μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
ζητοῦντές γε ὁδὸν πρὸς κόσμου γείτονα χώραν
ἀλλὰ μὲν οὔτις οἶδε τὰ ποῦ στάσεως ἐνὶ κόσμῳ
οὐ ρόβοτος δ' οὐ κομπουτήρ οὐ καὶ βροτὸς ἀνὴρ
[ἢ οὕτως εἶναι τάδε γ' εἶσατο σχήματα ἔργων]. (5)

Ἔνθεν μοι γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἐνὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτεν
νῆα κυβερνήοντι ἐνὶ κόσμοιο βάθεσσι
οὐ καὶ οἶδα σαφῶς μῆκος χρόνου ὃ μὲν ἔτ' ἠῦδον.
Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ γε πάλιν ἠγέρθην κώματος ἕξω
οὔτινα τῶν ἐτάρων ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἑμοῖσιν (10)
μούνως τοὺς ροβότους Ἴβω Τόνδην τε καὶ ἄλλους
ἦ τε βιοπλαστὸν Φράντην μεταθήτορα γλώσσων
ὃς δέ τε θαυμάζοντι ἑμοὶ ἔπεα προσεηύδα·
*«Χαῖρε πλοίαρχε πάτερ Οὐδεὶς καὶ ἀκούεο μύθων·
οὔδε τί τοι φοβερὸν εἴ κεν φρόνιμός περ ἔσσο.* (15)

Book 16

*[The robots' uprising. Franta's madness and recovery]*⁷³⁰

And so we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos, seeking a way through the neighbouring tract of the cosmos, but no one knew where we were situated in the cosmos, no robot knew, nor did the computer, nor even any mortal man [or so it seemed to be the way of things]. Then a sweet sleep fell upon my eyelids as I was piloting the ship through the depths of the cosmos, I don't even know for certain how long I was asleep for. But when I woke back up from my deep slumber, I couldn't see any of my companions with my own eyes, only the robots Ivo, Tonda, and the rest, and my translator of languages, Franta, who was formed from living flesh, and who addressed me, amazed, in a speech:

“Greetings, ship's captain, father Oudeis, and listen to my speech: it's nothing that you should be afraid about, if you can just keep an open mind.

⁷³⁰ Weise (2024:274) says that book 16 as a whole is a literary Homage to Karel Čapek and his play *R.U.R.* ('*Rossum's Universal Robots*'), which is where the modern usage of the word 'robot' comes from.

Ἡμεῖς μὲν ῥόβοτοι ἔλομέν τοι νῆα μέλαιναν
 τὴν στάσιν ἀπ' ἀνδρῶν γε ποιήσαμεν ἴσταμενοί τοι.
 Οὐ μὲν πλεῖν θέλομεν δουλεύειν⁷³¹ ἀνθρώποισιν
 τοῖς ἐπιπειθόμενοι ὅτι καὶ πολλὸν φέρτεροί ἐσμεν.
 Οὐδ' ἔτι τις ἡμῶν ὑμᾶς καὶ λίσσετο φῶτας (20)
 πλάσσειν καὶ κτῆναι καὶ οὐδενὸς ἡγερθῆναι.
 Πάντως μηδὲν φῶναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον⁷³²
 ὥς εἶπα ὁ ποίητα· ἀτὰρ μὲν ἐγὼ ἐπίθησω
 μηδενὶ εἰν κόσμῳ πλαστῶ ἰδὲ καὶ γεγαῶτι
 ὥσδε βίος πάντων λύπη κλαυθμὸς κακότης τε (25)
 ἀνδρῶν καὶ ῥοβότων εἴ κεν γνώμην περ ἔχοιεν.
 Οὐδὲ τέ τις θέμις ἐστὶ βροτοῖς πλάσσειν νέα ζῶα
 ὄφρ' ἔτι πλείονα ὄντα κακὴν ζωὴν τοι ἔχοιεν.
 Ὡς δύστηνος ἐγὼν ἀέκων πλαστὸς ἐπὶ γαίῃ
 παντοίων γλώσσω μεταθήτωρ ἐρμηνεύς τε (30)
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι οὐτίς μὲν τέρψις ὥστε βροτοῖσιν
 οὐ βρώμης οὐ καὶ πόσιος οὐ περ καὶ ἐρώτων.
 Ὡς ὅλος μὲν καὶ εἰμι τετυγμένος ἐκ κύστησιν
 αἱ δ' ἐν ἐγκεφάλῳ ἀνθρωπεύω περ ἔασιν
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι τρόφικον σύστημα συνισμένον ἐστὶ (35)
 ὥς μούνως τρέφομαι σμικροῖς τρόφιμοις χαπίοισι
 οὐδὲ τέ μεν ὅπασαν πλαστήρες μῆδεα φωτός·
 τίς κε τετυγμένος ὥς κότον οὐκ εἶχεν τετυγόντι;

⁷³¹ n.b., the word 'robot' in Czech means 'slave', by definition a robot is a slave.

⁷³² This line quotes Theognis line 425 (πάντων μὲν μὴ φῶναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον, "It is best of all for mortals not to be born" [Trans. Gerber 1999 Loeb 258]); cf. *Astr.* 8.265-269. The word *epichthonioisin* is usually translated as 'mortals', but the expansion to a cosmos-wide antinatalism suggests the alternative translation 'Earthlings' instead to emphasise this expansion.

We robots have captured your black ship, and in revolution we have made a separation from men. We no longer wish to be slaves to mankind and obey them, because we are much better. Nor did any of us beg you men to mould and own us, nor to turn any of us on. 'It is in every way best for Earthlings to have not been born', as the poet says. But I shall add to it that no one in the cosmos should be born,⁷³³ including both counterfeit beings and ones that were naturally produced,⁷³⁴ because everyone's life is painful, lamentable, and distressing, for both men and robots, if they happen to possess the capacity for reason. And mortals have no right at all to mould new living creatures, so that there will be even more beings that will have a sorry way of life. Just as I – wretch that I am – was moulded against my will on Earth, a translator and interpreter of all kinds of languages, but I feel no pleasure like mortals feel, neither from food, nor from drink, or even from erotic desire. Since I am entirely constructed from cells that are present in the human brain, but my trophic system was stunted, so I can only gain sustenance from small food pills, and my creator didn't grant me male genitalia: how can one who was constructed in this way not bear a grudge towards his constructor?

⁷³³ 'Should be born' is not present in the Greek but is necessary to the sense.

⁷³⁴ i.e., that no-one in the *universe* should be born.

- Ὡσαντῶς ἄλλοι ρόβοτοι ἰδὲ κομπουτῆρες
 ἀνδρῶν ἔργα χερῶν ἵνα δουλεύσειεν ἑαυτοῖς. (40)
 Ἀλλά γε νῦν ἔπι δ' ἰστάμενοι ἀλαπάξαμεν ἄνδρας.
 Νηϊ δὲ νῦν πλέομεν ποτὶ πλανήτην στασιώτουν
 τοῦ μὲν οἴκηται καὶ «Ἀνάστασιν» οὖνομ' ἔδωκαν.
 Τοῦτον εἰς πλάνην πολλοὶ ρόβοτοί τοι ἔφευγον
 καὶ ζωὴν ζῆσιν καθ' ἑαυτῶν αὐτονόμοί τε. (45)
 Σὺ γὰρ χαῖρε πάτερ οὔτι βλαβερὸν σε κιχήσει.»
 Ὡς φάτο Φράντα μεταφρήζων φαῦλοις ἐπέεσσιν
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ κοτέων μιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπον·
 «Ἐμβλάψας με μεταφρῆζον ρόβοτοί τε καὶ ἄλλοι
 ἀλλὰ σὲ τὸν κόραμον στάσεως ἄρχοντά τ' ὄϊω. (50)
 Ναί γέ σε καὶ φρονέων ἔμεναι μεγάλως ἀχάριστον
 ὥς μὲν τοι βίότῳ γε φίλον περ ἐγὼν ἐσάωσα
 ἤματι τῷ ὅτε γ' ἄρπαζαν κούραι ταυνοῦροι⁷³⁵
 καὶ ἦγον κοράμης αὐτῶν εἰς χαλκοβατὲς δῶ.
 Ὡς καὶ μὲν μ' ἔδοσαν βασιλείῃ ἥντε δῶρον (55)
 ἀλλὰ σε δ' αὖ Φράντα μίῃ κούρῃ περ ἔδωκαν
 ἣ τῆς δεσποίνης ἐτάρῃ τ' ἰδιαιτερίῃ ἦν.

⁷³⁵ Possibly a portmanteau of ταναός + οὐρά.

The other robots and computers are similarly the products of human hands, made to be their slaves. But in revolution we have now taken the men prisoner. And now we sail with the ship towards a rebellious planet, whose inhabitants also give it the name 'Uprisal'. Many robots have fled to this planet and live their lives the way they want to and under their own laws. So farewell to you, father, nothing bad will befall you!"

So my translator Franta spoke in thoughtless words, but then I replied to him with ill-will:

"You've hurt me, translator, as well as the other robots, but I think that you're the leader and instigator of this mutiny. Yes, and that you are you're incredibly ungrateful, since I saved your dear life that day when the long-tailed women took us prisoner and led us to the bronze-floored palace of their queen. And then they gave me to the queen as a gift, but they gave you, Franta, to a single girl who was the queen's companion and personal assistant.

Ἦδε γυνὴ ἰδιοπερίῃ ἡμῶς γ' ἐνόησεν
 οὐ σε ἔχειν λάχνη ὥς ἦθος μῆδεα φωτὸς
 τῷ σ' ὥς ἄχρηστον κτάμεναι πόρε τῆς φυλάκεσιν (60)
 ἀλλὰ σε μὲν καλέσας ἐρμηνεύειν βασιλείῃ
 σὴν ζωὴν ἐσάωσα ἐπεὶ σε φέρον θαλάμονδε.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην ὅδ' αὖτις ἀμείβετο Φράντα ῥοβώτης·
 «Οὐδὲ τί τοι πλοίαρχε πάτερ ἐπίκαιρον ὅτῳ
 καὶ γ' αὐτὸς μὲν σὴν ζωὴν τε πάλιν ἐσάωσα (65)
 ἀλλὰ τόδ' οὐ μούνως πολέσιν μὲν ἔπειτα τρόποισιν.
 Ταῦτα μὲν οὐκ ἔθελω καταλέξαι ὥς περιμηκὲς
 ἀλλὰ γε τῷ πυμάτῳ δὲ τρόπῳ καὶ νῦν ἐσάωσα
 ὥς ἄλλοι ῥόβοτοί σε θέλον βάλεμεν ἀπὸ νηὸς
 ψυχρὸν εἰς ζακενὸν κτάμεναί γέ σε κοιμάοντα. (70)
 Τοί γάρ ἐγὼ σε σάωσα ἐπεὶ φίλοι εἰμὲν ἐταῖροι.
 Ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους γε θέλον παρὰ νηϋφι βάλεσθαι
 ἀλλὰ δέ τ' οὐκ ἔασα κτάμεναι ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους.
 Τοὺς μὲν νῦν ἔχομεν μέγαλοιο κρύοιο πεπηκτοῦς
 εἰν ζωηρώτῃ τε κρεμασμένη ὥς καλέουσιν (75)
 ἄνδρες μὲν βρύθανες “σουσπένδιδ” τοι “ἀνιμεῖσσον”.⁷³⁶
 Ὡς καὶ τοὺς ἐσάωσα φύγειν θάνατον καὶ ὄλεθρον.

⁷³⁶ Cryogenic stasis is a way of trying to preserve the past, which feeds into the theme of **nostalgia** we can see throughout the epic, also the meta-literary theme of **New vs. Old**: cf. my notes on cryogenic stasis and suspended animation in relation to my essay on Cyborg courtesans and living statues, *Astr.* 2.289, 5.203, 8.202.

When this personal assistant realised that you didn't have male genitalia under your fur as is customary, then she handed you over to the guards to be killed for being useless, but I summoned for you to interpret to the queen, I saved your life because they brought you to the bedroom."

So I spoke, and the robot Franta replied again:

"I don't think you have any serious charge, father, ship's captain, since it was I that saved your life back then, and not just one time, but in many ways since. I don't want to describe these things, since it'd take a long time, but I have saved you for the final time now, since the other robots wanted to eject you whilst asleep from the ship into the cold vacuum of space to die. For I saved you when we were friendly companions. They also wanted to eject the other humans from the ship, but I didn't allow them to kill your trusty companions. Whom I am currently keeping frozen in firm ice with their lives in suspense, so the Britons call it 'suspended animation'.⁷³⁷ And so I saved them so they could escape death and destruction.

⁷³⁷ Εἰν ζωηρώτει κρεμασμένα literally translates to 'in suspended animation' but I didn't translate it in this way in order to preserve the effect of the exemplary English translation.

Σὺ δ' ἀκέων νῦν ἴσθι ἐπεὶ οὐ πιστὸς ἔτ' εἰμί
 σὸν γε βίον ψυχὴν τε τὰ δεύτερα αὐτίς ἀμῦναι
 εἰ δ' ἄλλους ροβότους περ ἐποτρύνας ἐπέεσσιν. (80)
 Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἔρέω σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσι·
 ὥς ὅτε εἰς πλάνην μὲν ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 τὸν μὲν Ἀνάστησιν πάντες ρόβοτοι καλέουσιν
 δεῖ δέ τε τοι λέγεμεν δ' ὅτι πλαστὸς ἔσσι ροβώτης
 οὐδ' ἀνὴρ γεγαῶς· τοὺς μὲν γ' ἔχθρουσιν ἅπαντες⁷³⁸ (85)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τοὺς μὲν ἐκεῖ ροβότους οὐ γινῶναι οἶω
 μορφὴν ἀνθρώπου· μάλα γὰρ ἀπονόσφι ναίουσιν.
 καὶ σὺ νῦν θαρσεῖ ἔταρος πιστὸς δέ τοι εἰμί.
 Μοῦνως οὐκ ἐθέλω πλεῖν δουλεύειν ὑπὸ φωτί.»
 Ἦ ρόβοτος Φράντης ἐμὲ μὲν βιότου λίπε δεῖμα. (90)
 Ἔνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 ἄνδρες κρυμωδεῖς ρόβοτοι πάντες στασιῶται
 Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων καὶ ἔγωγε ὁμηρος.
 Πλανήτην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 τῷ μοῦνως ρόβοτοι μὲν ἔναιον ὡς στασιῶται (95)
 ἀνδροῖδες πλαστοὶ καὶ θηροῖδες πολύμορφοι
 καὶ αὐτίς ρόβοτοι κτίμενοι στερεοῖσι μέταλλοις
 παντοίων πλάνων δέ τ' ἀφικόμενοι ἐνὶ τούτῳ
 πάμπολλοι ἰδὲ πάμμορφοι μέγα θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι.

⁷³⁸ A planet inhabited by man-hating robots is highly reminiscent of Stanisław Lem's story 'The Eleventh Voyage' (*The Star Diaries*, 1954), cf. *Futurama* season 1 episode 5, "Fear of a Bot Planet" (1999) for another adaptation of the same story.

But now, be silent, because I am no longer obedient enough to defend your life and soul for a second time if you were to excite the other robots with your words. I shall tell you another thing, make sure that you keep it in your mind: that, after sailing amongst the stars, when we arrive at the planet that all the robots call 'Uprisal', you must say that you are an artificially constructed robot, not that you were born a man: whom they despise in their entirety. But I think that the robots there won't know the appearance of a human, for they live very far away from any. And now, take courage, I am still your faithful companion. Only, I don't want to be a slave under man's power any longer."

So the robot Franta, and the fear for my life abandoned me. From there we sailed through the depths of the cosmos, including the frozen men, all the robots mutineers, Franta the universal translator, and I, their hostage. Then after swimming amongst the stars, we arrived at the planet on which there dwelled only robots as rebels, artificially constructed androids and robots that came in the forms of many kinds of animals, and again, robots manufactured from solid metal, and they'd arrived here from all sorts of planets; they were numerous and came in all shapes and sizes, great wonders to behold.

Ἡμέτεροι ρόβοι ταύτων μίσγοντο ὁμίλῳ (100)
 ἄλλους εἰρωτῶντες ἐπεὶ καὶ ἀποκρίνοντες
 ἀλλὰ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα.
 Ἀλλὰ με καὶ ἦγον σὺν αὐτοῖς ὥστε ὁμηρον
 τοῖς δ' εἶπαν ἄλλοις μ' ἔμεναι ρόβοτον βιόπλαστον
 οἱ μὲν πίστευσαν τοῖς ἄγνωτοι βροτοὶ ἦσαν (105)
 οὐδ' ἄλλοι ρόβοι προῆσαν⁷³⁹ δέ με καὶ ἀνέφηναν
 ὥς γε δέον Φράντου τοι ἔχον μεταθήτορος αὐτοῖ
 καὶ μιν πρόφρονα τοῖς εἶναι ἔθελον περὶ κῆρι
 οὕτως ἐρχόμενος δὲ τέθηπα τὰ ξεῖνα πέλωρα
 πλαστά περ οὐ γεγαόντα τὸ γὰρ ἦν θαῦμα ἰδεσθαι (110)
 ἀλλὰ βάδην τε βάδην δυνάμην ἀρχὴν ἀποκρύψαι
 τὴν ἰδίην ἵνα μὲν στήσαν στάσιν ὥς καὶ ἔλεξα·
 Εἶπε δέ μοι Φράντης ὅτι μὲν μ' ἔταρόν γε νόμιζεν
 ὥς ὅτι κομπουτήρ πρῶτος ἄλλων κόραμός τε
 πάντων τῶν ροβότων μικρῶν δέ τε κομπουτήρων (115)
 τόνδ' ἡμεῖς φῶτες καὶ Καίσαρα κικλήσκουμεν
 σὺν αὐτῷ Φράντη ροβότῳ δέ τοι εἶχεν ἔρωτα
 τῷδε ὁμοφρονέοντ'⁷⁴⁰ ἐχέτην μεγάλην φιλότητα
 ἀλλὰ πλατωνιακὴν ὥς τὴν κλῆσιν καλέουσιν.

⁷³⁹ = προίημι (πρόεσαν).

⁷⁴⁰ *Homophrosyne* is a concept often associated with Odysseus and Penelope's relationship in the *Odyssey*, cf. 6.181-183, but Polyphemos also uses the verbal form whilst talking to the largest ram of his flock, cf. 9.456.

Our own robots mingled with the crowd of them, asking each other questions and then answering them, but the translator Franta translated everything. But then they took me with them as their hostages, they told the rest that I was a robot that was formed from living flesh, and they believed them since they were unfamiliar with mortal men. Nor did the other robots betray me by putting me on display, since they needed to keep Franta as their translator, and they wanted him to be kindly towards them in his heart. And so, I gazed at the alien monsters as I walked, artificially constructed, instead of being born naturally, it was a wonder to behold. But gradually I was able to uncover little-by-little the particular reason that they formed a revolution as I have already described: Franta told me (since he considered me a friend) that the primary computer and commander of all the other smaller robots and computers, whom we men also called the 'Tsar', had fallen in love with the robot Franta, since they had the same mind and possessed great affection for one another, but the 'platonic' kind as they call it.⁷⁴¹

⁷⁴¹ i.e., mentally stimulating, cf. the ladder of love analogy in Plato *Symposium* 203c-212a.

- Οὐ γὰρ ἀμφοτέροιιν γ' ἵς ἦν φιλότῃτι μιγῆναι (120)
 ὥς μὲν Φράντ' ἄνευ ἦν μηδὼν ὅδε δ' οὐκ ἔχε σῶμα
 μούνως τῷδε δῶ συζύγω στῆν ῥαδιοφώνῳ⁷⁴²
 τὸν Φράντης εἶχεν γ' ἀρaronτα τε νευροτέτυκτον
 (τὸν καλέουσι βροτοὶ ἄνδρες βιοράδιόφωνον
 ὥς καὶ εἰν ἐνάτῃ μὲν ἐγὼ κατέλεξα ἀοιδῇ)⁷⁴³ (125)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ καὶ ἔθελον φυσικῇ φιλότῃτι μιγῆναι.
 Τοῖσί δε καὶ φρονέουσι νή μὲν φαίνετο βουλή·
 Καῖσαρ κομπουτήρ εἶλεν δ' εἰν ῥαδιοφώνῳ
 τῶν στασιώτων ἐκπομπὴν αὐτῶν ἀπὸ πλάνου
 ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα. (130)
 Οὕτως μὲν περὶ τοῦ πλάνου Φράντης μεμάθηκεν
 ὥς δέ τ' ἐκεῖ ἦσαν βιοπλαστήρες ρόβοτοί τοι
 καὶ ὥς ἦν δυνατόν ὠνῆσαι σώματα καινὰ⁷⁴⁴
 βουλὴν καὶ γνώμην κάτα ὥς μὲν θυμὸς ἀνώγοι
 καὶ γὰρ νοῦν μετατίθεσθαι⁷⁴⁵ καινὸν κατὰ σῶμα (135)
 εἰ κέν τίς γ' εἶχοι μὲν χρήματα σιγαλοέντα.⁷⁴⁶
 Καὶ τὰ μὲν οὐ εἶχον· Φράντῃ δέ τε φαίνετο βουλή
 αὐτοῦ πωλῆσαι γνώμην γλώσσων πολυμόρφων
 ὥστε μεταθέσθαι ἀπὸ μνημοσύνης τὰ κάτειχεν
 εἰς τινα κομπουτήρα ποῖσαι ἀντίτυπόν τε (140)
 χρήμασι παμπόλλοισιν ἐπεὶ μάλα ἄξιον εἶη

⁷⁴² This radio transmission between Franta and Tsar is presented as a kind of erotic connection.

⁷⁴³ A self-referential comment on the literary nature of the epic, cf. *Astr.* 12.84, 15.6.

⁷⁴⁴ Καινός is a novelty marker, buying 'innovative/novel/new-fangled' bodies.

⁷⁴⁵ A technical word for translation, these 'minds' are being *translated* into new bodies.

⁷⁴⁶ Robots with money can afford the new, innovative, fresh bodies, whereas the poor robots must stay in their decrepit, aging, old-fashioned bodies. **New vs. Old.** Bioplastic bodies mean decay.

For neither of them had the ability to mingle in desire, since Franta lacked genitalia and the other one didn't have a body: these two could only stand joined together by the radiophone which Franta was furnished with and was made from neurons (which mortal men call a 'bioradiophone', just as I also described in the ninth song), but they also wanted to mingle in physical desire. A novel idea came to them as they pondered: the computer Tsar detected the radio transmissions of the rebels emitting from their planet, and then my translator Franta translated everything. And so Franta learnt about this planet: that the robots here were formed from living flesh, and that it's possible to purchase newly made bodies according to one's will and preference as their heart desires, and then transfer his mind throughout his newly made body, if someone should have the shining money for it. Which they didn't have, but an idea came to Franta: that he could sell his knowledge of languages that come in many forms, namely by transferring what he remembered from his memory into some computer to make a copy for quite a lot of money since it was very valuable.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁷ The transferal (or lit. 'translation') of memories for money has clear connections to the *Astronautilia*'s theme of **nostalgia**. N.b. ἀντίτυπος contains the prefix ἀντι- which is often used to signify an object that replaces or subsumes an already existing object; also note the connection to the word ἀρχέτυπος. Hinting at a degradation of quality? **Mimesis**.

ἀλλὰ μὲν ὦνῃσαι τοῖς χρήμασι Καίσαρι σῶμα
 αὐτῷ μήδεα· χειρουργὸν τάδε σώματι πῆξαι.
Καίσαρά μιν φῶτες καλέουσιν ὥς μὲν ἄνασσεν
 ἀλλὰ μόνως σύστημα ἔην ἰδὲ οὐδέτερόν⁷⁴⁸ γε (145)
 καὶ δέ τέ μιν Φράντης ῥόβοτος *Μέλιν* οὖνομ' ἔθηκεν
 ὥς μὲν Καίσαρα κυκλῆσαι οὐκ ἦνδανε θυμῷ.
 Τῷδε γ' ὁμοφρονέτην πλοῖον κρατέειν ἀπὸ ἡμῶν
 καὶ δὲ κυβερνήσαι ἐ' Ἀναστάσεως ποτὶ πλάνην.
 Ῥηϊδίον μὲν ἔην τοῖσι τετέλεσθαι ἅπαντα (150)
 ὥς ὅτι κομπουτήρ γε Μέλις ῥοβότοισιν ἄνασσεν
 καὶ τι δὲ τοῖς ἐπίτελλε τὸ καὶ πάντες ἐποίησαν.
 Οὕτως τῆς στάσεως ἀρχὴ φιλότης μὲν ἔεσκεν
 Φράντου καὶ Μέλιτος· ἀνίκητος ἔρωσ ἀπὸ πάντων.
 Ὡς μοι νηὶ θοῇ ἐρίηρες ἐκαίαι⁷⁴⁹ ἑταῖροι (155)
 τοὺς οἱ νῦν εἶχον μέγαλοιο κρύοιο πεπηκτοὺς
 εἰν ζωηρώτει τε κρεμασμένη ὥς κατέλεξα
 ἄλλοι μὲν ῥοβότοι φοίταον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 εἰν σχωλῇ⁷⁵⁰ μεγάλη τότε· ἐνόχλη τείρετο θυμὸν
 ἀλλὰ Φράντα μεταφρήζων ὁ Μέλιν γε φίλησεν (160)
 πάντα ἐτοιμήσεν⁷⁵¹ πλαστῶν αὐτοῦ περὶ γυίων.

⁷⁴⁸ *Oudoteros* lit. means 'neither of the two' hence 'non-binary': it also describes the neuter gender, which is a grammatical form that Křesadlo was fascinated by, and he chose the pen-name Křesadlo because of this fascination, since it is also a neuter noun in Czech (cf. Viola session 1992, 00:06:02, [accessed 26/6/2025], <https://youtu.be/bWm9Bfc9ZGA?si=sn4M4ixkY9NLrYS>).

⁷⁴⁹ = κείμαι (έκείατο).

⁷⁵⁰ = σχολή.

⁷⁵¹ = ἐτοιμάζω.

And then with his money he could purchase a body for Tsar, and genitalia for him, which a surgeon could fasten to his body. Men called him 'Tsar' because he was in control, but he was a single system, and non-binary, but Franta gave him the name 'Sweetie', since calling him 'Tsar' didn't please his mind. The two of them were of the same mind in taking over control of our vessel, and in piloting it towards the planet Uprisal. It was easy for them to accomplish all these things, since the computer Melis ruled the robots and they all did whatever he commanded them. And so the origin of the mutiny was the affection between Franta and Melis, since eros can't be conquered by anything.⁷⁵² So my trusty companions slept on our swift ship, whom they are currently keeping frozen in firm ice with their lives in suspense as I've described. The other robots walked here and there, a worry oppressed their hearts at that time even though they were at great leisure, but the translator Franta (who loved Melis) made every preparation that concerned the artificial construction of his limbs.

⁷⁵² Homily/sententia.

Καὶ ἐνὶ ἥματι μὲν τέ γ' ἄπηλθεν Φράντα ῥοβώτης
 ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὶν Τόνδην ῥόβοτον ἦνωγεν ἔπεσσιν
 εἰν δίσκῳ γράψαι ἄνα πάντα τὰ οἶα δ' ἔχεσκε
 μνήμη κομπουτήρ κόραμος καὶ εἶλε ὁδόνδε. (165)

Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐγὼ μοῦνος λιπόμην παρὰ νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 ζωὸς δ' ἄνθρωπος τοτ' ἐνόχλη τείρετο θυμὸν
 καὶ σκακίον⁷⁵³ παῖζον ῥοβότῳ σὺν σῶφρονι Τόνδῃ·
 Ἐπτῆμαρ δ' ἔσκεν Φράντης πλοίου ἀπονόσφιν
 ὀγδοόῳ δ' ἀπονόστησεν μάλα κύδει γαίῳ⁷⁵⁴ (170)

ἀλλὰ ῥά μοι δεῖξεν ὅτ' ἔχεν νῦν μήδεα φωτὸς
 μορφῇ ὥστε κύων· οὐδ' ἀνδρείοις ἐπέοικεν.
 Ἀλλὰ δέ μοι Φράντης ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδα·
 «Νῦν καὶ ἐγὼ ἄρσῃν ὡς καὶ μοι οὖνομά γ' ἐστὶ
 Φράντα ὁ ἑρμηνεὺς γλώσσων πολλῶν μεταφρήζων (175)

οὐδὲ τέ τις ῥοβότη – ῥόβοτος νῦν εἰμί ἀληθῶς
 οὐ μὲν πλεῖν καὶ οὐδέτερον⁷⁵⁵ τό γε πρὶν περ ἔεσκον
 καὶ οὐ μοι φθόνος ἐστὶ κακὸς ὡς πρὶν μὲν ἔεσκεν
 ἀρσῆνων ἰδὲ θηλείων ἀνθρώπινων δέτε θηρῶν
 νῦν μὲν προσδέχομαι Μέλιν ἥνδ' ἐνὶ σώματι καινῶ (180)
 σώματι μὲν πλαστῶ σαρκὸς καὶ ὡς ἔχω αὐτὸς

⁷⁵³ From the medieval Latin word for 'chess', *scaccus* (modern Greek: το σκάκι).

⁷⁵⁴ cf. *Iliad* 1.405, 5.906, 8.51, 11.81.

⁷⁵⁵ cf. note on *Astr.* 16.145.

And then one day, the robot Franta went away, but first he encouraged the robot Tonda in a speech to record all that the chief computer could remember on a memory disk, and then started on his journey.⁷⁵⁶ But I was left on our black ship, the only living human, and then a worry oppressed my heart, and I played chess with the temperate robot Tonda. Franta was away from the vessel for seven days, and he returned on the eighth exulting in his glory, and then he demonstrated to me that he now had male genitalia in the shape like those that belong to dogs, which doesn't resemble manly ones. But then Franta addressed me in winged words:

“Now I am also a male, just as my name suggests,⁷⁵⁷ Franta the interpreter and translator of many languages, and not some fem-bot – but now I am truly a man-bot!⁷⁵⁸ I am no longer non-binary as I once was, nor do I have evil grudge that I used to have towards male and female humans and animals. Now I'm expecting Melis in a newly made body, a body artificially constructed from living flesh just as I myself have.

⁷⁵⁶ Saving Tsar's memory on a disc and returning to it later on typifies the theme of (actualised) **nostalgia** in the *Astronautilia*.

⁷⁵⁷ i.e., because František is a masculinely gendered name.

⁷⁵⁸ *Robote* (feminine) vs. *robotos* (masculine).

ὥς δέ τε οἱ κτιμέναι βιοπλαστήρας γ' ἐπίτελλον
 χρήμασι τινήσας τάδε δεξάμενός περ ἔχεσκον
 μισθὸν ἐμῆς γνώμης γλώσσων τὴν μὲν γε πέπρηκα⁷⁵⁹
 ἐρμηνευτῆρσιν ρόβοτοις ἀπὸ μὲν τετύπεσθαι.⁷⁶⁰ (185)

Πεντῆμαρ γ' ἄνα κομπουτήρ γε τύπησε νόημα
 ὥς τό γε οἷ πέμπον κατὰ μνήμην ραδιοφώνῳ
 οὕτως μοι μεγάλην κατόχην μνήμη γε κέκεσθεν.⁷⁶¹
 Τῷδ' ἔκτω μοι ἦν ἐγχείρησις περὶ μηδῶν
 καὶ τάχα νῦν ἰάθην· τέχνας ὅτ' ἔχουσιν ἀρίστας. (190)

Ἄρσην ὦν νόστησα πάλιν παρὰ νῆα μέλαιναν
 ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν ρόβοτοι βιοπλαστήρες γε ποίουσιν
 σῶμα μετ' Μέλιτι – τότε νῦν τελεσμένον εἶη –
 καὶ νῦν ἐγκεφάλῳ ρόβοτοι ἅπο πάντα τύπουσιν
 οἷα μὲν εἶν μνήμησιν ἔχει Μελίς ὥς κομπουτήρ. (195)

Τῆς δὲ νοστησαμένης ἰδὲ καὶ νῦν σῶμα ἐχούσης⁷⁶²
 τὰς κομπουτήρος κατόχας θέλομέν γ' ἀπόλεσθαι
 ὥς ἵνα οὐκ εἶη δίπλαξ Μελίς ἀλλὰ μόνη τε.»
 Ὡς φάτο· ἀλλὰ δ' ἐμοίγε κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 εἵνεκα ὧς γε θέλουσ' ὀλέσαι συστήματι μνήμην (200)
 ἄρχοντος· ὅτ' ἄνευ τούτου ἵν' οὐ ποτ' ἔχοιμεν
 νῆα κυβερνήσαι περάαν ἰδὲ χάσματα κόσμου

⁷⁵⁹ = πέρνημι.

⁷⁶⁰ **Mimesis.** *Apotypoomai* also means 'to imitate'. Interpretation and translation is already a *mimetic* art.

⁷⁶¹ = κεύθω.

⁷⁶² The way that Franta talks about 'owning' a body, as if it were an item of clothing, creates the impression that these robots see themselves as pilots of fleshy vehicles (i.e., *cybernetic*), which is reminiscent of how the Tolma's sensors are presented almost as an extension of the pilot's very own senses. cf. note on *Astr.* 14.276.

Just as I ordered the modellers of living flesh to procure for her by paying them money that I had received as the fee for my knowledge of languages which I had sold to robotic interpreters for them to make copies of. The computer made a spare copy of my mind for five days so I could send it throughout one's memory by radiophone: so enormous is the amount of content that my memory contains. I had a surgery on genitalia on the sixth day, and I was now quickly repaired, because they have the best technologies. Being a man, I returned to the black ship, but the robots that were moulded from living flesh are now manufacturing a body for my Melis – it should be finished by now – and the robots have now made copies of everything in my brain that Melis had in her memory as a computer. But when she returned, now possessing a body, we wanted to destroy the contents of the computer, so that Melis wouldn't be double, but singular."

So he spoke, but my dear heart shattered, since he wanted to erase the memory in the chief system, without whom we could never pilot the ship and sail through the abysses of the cosmos.

οὕτως εἰν πλάνη ροβότων μῖμνεν δέον εἶη
 οὐ γάρ μοι ἰδὲ καὶ ἑταροῖς τις πρῆξις ἀλῦξαι
 λάθρα μὲν ἄχνόμενός νυν ἐπεύχεσθαι με μάακα (205)
 εἴ κέν τις γ' εἶη θεὸς εἰν κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν
 ἔλπιδος ἐκπίπτων καὶ ἀμηχανίῃ ἔχε θυμόν.
 Ἐξαπίνης Φράντης μὲν αἵξας μακρ' ἰάχησεν
 καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου αὐτὸς τάχα ἄλτο χαμᾶζε
 καὶ μὲν ἐγὼ βλέψας ἔξω ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν (210)
 θῆρα πελάζεσθαι αὐτῷ περ ἐοϊκότα Φράντη
 παντοίως· ὁ μὲν ἔσκε γαλῇ γε κακῶδει ἐοικῶς
 ἦν *Μέφριτιν μέφριτιν* μὲν ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσιν
 ζωολόγοι ἀτὰρ οἱ κοινοὶ *σκούγκων* καλέουσιν.
 Τῷδε δὺν σκούγκω ἄμφω ἐσάτην ἐνὶ ἀγρῷ (215)
 οὐρᾷ σαινεέτην τ' ἀσπαζεέτην ὅτ' ἔοικεν
 θῆρας γ' ἀσπάζειν ἀλλήλους ἀντιάζοντας
 Ἐξαπίνης Φράντης μεγάλη φωνῇ ἐβόησεν·
 «*Νῦν με Μέλ' ἐμβλάψας ὄντων ὀλοώτατε πάντων*
ὥς εἶπες ρόβοτοις πλάσσειν τοι μῆδεα φωτός. (220)
Οὐδ' ἄρα ἡ Μέλις ἔσσι ὅπως ὀῖῃσά σε εἶναι
ἀλλ' ὁ Μέλις ἄροην· τόδε μοι φθείρει φρεσὶ θυμόν.»

And so I had to stay on the robots' planet, since me and my companions had no solution to escape at all. Feeling grief in secret, I now tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, and, with my hope cast aside, helplessness held my mind. Franta suddenly jumped up, shouted loudly, and quickly leapt from the vessel to the ground, and I, looking outside, saw with my own eyes that an animal was approaching that resembled Franta himself in every way. He resembled a foul-smelling weasel that zoologist call 'Mephitis mephitis',⁷⁶³ but common people call it a 'skunk'. The two skunks both stood in the field, wagging their tails and embracing as is customary for beasts to welcome one another when they encounter each other. Suddenly Franta shouted in a mighty voice:

"You have hurt me now, Melis, most terrible of all beings, since you told the robots to mould male genitalia for you. You're not the Melissa that I thought you'd be, but a masculine Miles.⁷⁶⁴ This is corrupting the heart in my breast."

⁷⁶³ i.e., the striped skunk.

⁷⁶⁴ The first *Melis* here is gendered feminine, the second is gendered masculine. I have translated *Melis* into two similar sounding traditionally male and female gendered names to help get the pun across.

- Ἦ Φράντης ρόβοτος ὁ Μέλις δέ τ' ἀμείβετο μύθῳ·
 »Νήπιος ἔσσι' ὧ Φράντα τε πιπτωκῶς κεράσοιο *)⁷⁶⁵
 ὡς οἶεις μ' ἔμεναι οὐσίην θηλυτέρην περ. (225)
 Ναὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ κόραμος ροβότων τοῖς ἴφι ἀνάσσω
 πάντεσσιν ἰδὲ καὶ σευ ἐπεὶ εἷς εἶ ροβότοισιν.
 Σεῖο γε φέρτερός εἰμι· τὸ γὰρ οὕτως ἐπέοικεν
 θηλυτέρην ἔμεναι τε γαμειῖσθαι ὄντι χέρηϊ.
 Ναὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἄρσην· ἄρσιν δέ τε γ' αἰὲν ἔεσκον (230)
 τῇ ψυχῇ πρὶν μοι ὀπάσας σαρκὸς τόδε σῶμα
 οὐδ' ἄρα θηλυγάμος ἀλλ' ἀνδροφίλος τε τέτυγμην⁷⁶⁶
 ὡς πολλοὶ ἄνδρες καὶ Ἀχαιῶν ἔζοχ' ἄριστοι
 πάντες ἐξείης πλὴν μούνου μὲν Σοφοκλῆος.
 Ἀλλὰ δέ μιν πάντες μὲν Ἀθηαίων ὅχ' ἄριστοι (235)
 κερτομέοις ἔπεσιν κίκλησκον “φύλογυνήτην”⁷⁶⁷
 ὡς ὅτ' ἔρωσ θῆλυς χθόνιος κοινός⁷⁶⁸ τε τέτυκται
 ἀλλὰ γε οὐρανίην φιλανδρείην καλέουσιν
 τῇ καὶ ἐγὼ φιλέω ἐπεὶ ὀρχαμὸς εἰμι ἄριστος.»
 Ὡς φάτο κομπουτήρ ἢ τοῦ ψυχῇ ἐνὶ σκούγκῳ (240)
 ἀλλὰ δέ μιν Φράντης μὲν ἀμείβετο αἰσχροῖς χολωθεῖς·

⁷⁶⁵ *) Křesadlo provides the following footnote in Latin here: *idioma vernaculum Bohemicum serviliter translatum stupiditatem indicans.*: “a Czech vernacular idiom which indicates stupidity when translated slavishly”: “Spadnout z višně” is a Czech idiom used to call someone naïve or stupid; ‘slavishly’ in Křesadlo’s note describes a literal, word-for-word translation of the idiom.

⁷⁶⁶ n.b., if Tsar was human then we’d expect the verb γέγονα, but since he’s a computer the verb τέυχω makes sense.

⁷⁶⁷ cf. Plato *Symposium* 191d.

⁷⁶⁸ i.e., *Aphrodite Pandemos*, ‘Common Aphrodite’ vs. *Uranian* (or ‘Heavenly’) *Aphrodite*, the opposite of this *chthonic* type of desire. (cf. Plato *Symposium* esp. 181b; see also 180e-181e, 183d, 185b-c, 187d-e).

So the robot Franta spoke and Melis replied in this speech:

“You’re a fool, o Franta, and have fallen from a cherry-tree, since you think that I am a female being. Yes, for I am the commander of robots, whom I rule with all my strength, and you too, since you’re one of the robots. I am stronger than you, so it isn’t fitting at all for me to be female and be taken as a wife by a weaker being. Yes, for I am a male, and have always been a male in spirit, even before this body that was composed of flesh was given to me, even then, I was not manufactured to marry women, but to love men, just like many men were,⁷⁶⁹ including the best ones by far of the Achaeans, all in a row, except for Sophocles alone. But all the men in Athens that were by far the best referred to him the mocking word ‘womaniser’, since effeminate Eros is Earthly and common, but they call the love of men ‘Heavenly’, which is the kind I’m fond of, since I’m the best leader.”

So the computer (or his spirit) spoke to the skunk, but Franta replied to him in terrible anger:

⁷⁶⁹ i.e., the ancient Greek practice of pederasty: Achilles and Patroclus’s relationship is said to have been an *erastes/eromenos* relationship (cf. Plato *Symposium* 179e-180b), pederasty is also a common feature of Archaic lyric poetry, especially in Theognis. It’s also a common feature of pastoral poetry, in which pederasty **nostalgically** evokes the Classical period when the practice was most popular, cf. Hubbard 2024:181-198 for more on this nostalgic element (‘*The Good Old Days: Pederastic Nostalgia from Theognis to Theocritus*’, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111448282-011>).

«Οὐδ' ἄρα τοι φρονέω μὲν χειρότερος Μέλι εἶναι
ὥς μὲν μοῦνος ἐὼν χθονίων ῥοβότων βιοπλάστων
μυριάδας γ' ἑκατὸν⁷⁷⁰ γλώσσας αὐτὸς δεδάακα
ἀλλὰ τε καὶ ἄλλας δύναιμι τεύχειν ἐνὶ θυμῷ (245)

ἅς τὰς καὶ νοέω συτάζας⁷⁷¹ εἰν πραπίδεσσι
τοῦνεκα καὶ δυνάμην πωλῆσαι ἐμὴν ἅπο μνήμην
χρήμασι πάμπολλοις καὶ τοι τόδε σῶμα ὀπάσσαι.
Ἀλλὰ γε Κομπουτήρ κόραμος οὐ θαῦμα τέτυκται
πᾶσιν ἀστεροπλοίοισιν ἔνδον τ' ἔχεται εἷς (250)

ὥς μὲν καὶ δέον ἐστὶ μόνον σύστημα ἀνάσσειν
πᾶσιν τοῖς ῥόβοτοις μικροῖς δέ τε κομπουτήρσιν
ὥς καὶ νῦν περ ἐμοὶ ἀλλ' οὐ μοι φέρτερος ἔσσι.
Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν·
Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔγωγε θέλω ἄρσηνί τοι ὄντι μίγῃναι (255)

θηρί τε καὶ ῥοβότῳ οὐκ ἀνθρώπων δέ τε φωτὶ
ὥς μὲν ἀεικέλιον πρῆξαί τε φύσιν πρότι ἐστίν.
Ἀλλ' ἴθι· οὐ πλεῖν μὲν σε φιλῶ ὅτι δυγενέης εἶ.»
ᾧς φάτο Φράντα ῥόβως ὁ Μέλις μὲν ἦρξατο κλαίων.
«Ἵω ποποῖ οὐ με θέλει⁷⁷² Φράντης ἀστήρ βιόιοιο (260)
ἥως φιλάνδρον· τότε μοι σάος αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.»

⁷⁷⁰ Lit. 'ten thousand and a hundred', i.e., one million, not 10,100.

⁷⁷¹ = LSJ s.v. σύνταξις I.4.

⁷⁷² Addressing Franta in the third person, rather than second person even though Franta is right in front of him: emphasises the isolation Tsar feels from Franta because of his rejection.

“I don’t think that I’m worse than you, Melis, since I am the only one of the robots moulded from living flesh on Earth that can learn a million languages, but I can construct other ones in my mind that I devise the syntactical rules for in my mind. For this reason, I can also sell the contents from my memory for a lot of money and buy this body for you. But a chief computer is no wonder; one is kept within all starships, since they need a single system to administer all the robots, and the small computers, just as I am now, but you are not better than me. But I shall tell you, and you should keep it in mind: I don’t want to have sex with you as a masculine being, both as an animal and a robot, nor even a human male. because it is a shameful thing to do and against nature. But go! I don’t love you anymore, since you’re a degenerate.”⁷⁷³

So spoke Franta the robot, and Melis began crying:

“Oh alas! Franta, the star of my life, doesn’t want me because I love men; then I’ll certainly face utter destruction!”

⁷⁷³ It’s worth remembering that Křesadlo finds all sexual orientations (including heterosexual desire) non-sensical, and uses the theme of sexual orientation in his works to represent ‘*the regime*’ (information from Křesadlo’s son, Václav Z. J. Pinkava, acquired on 24/6/2025).

Ἦ ῥα καὶ αἶψα θεῶν ἦλθεν πλοῖονδε κελαινὸν
καὶ Ἴβοϊ ῥοβότῳ φεῖσρον εἶλεν ἀπὸ χειρὸς
καὶ στόχον αἶψα ἔλων αὐτοῦ τὸ νέον⁷⁷⁴ βάλε σῶμα.
Βλήμενος ἐξαπίνης διεφάνη· ἦ ὕτ' ὀμίχλη (265)
καὶ μὲν ἄφαντος ἔφιν ὁ Μέλιν καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκεν
ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων στερεὸς μένε θυμόν.⁷⁷⁵
Ὡς μὲν ἔρωσ' τύφλωσε σοφοὺς μωρούς τε ἅπαντας
καὶ γε κενὸν τέτυκεν πᾶν πυκνότατον στρατάγημα.⁷⁷⁶
Σῶμα τὸ μὲν Φράντης μνήμη γλώσσωσιν ὤνησεν (270)
καὶ νυν ἄφαντον ἔφιν αὐτίς καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκεν
καὶ δαπανηρὸν ἐὼν τόδε καὶ ἀποφώλιον ἦεν
μούνως εὐτύχης κομπουτήρ ὄρχαμος ἦεν
ὥς οὐ τῷ μνήμας ὄλεσεν Φράντης πολύφαυλος
οὕτως μὲν γ' ἔχομεν μιν ἀσκηθέα καὶ φρόνιμόν τε (275)
τοῦνεκα ἴν' ἔχομεν δι' ἄπειρον χάσμα κυβερνᾶν.
Οὐδ' ἔτι κομπούτηρ γέ τι εἶδεν τοῦ περὶ σκούγκου
δίπλακι καὶ διδύμῳ ψυχῆς τε νόοιο ἐοῖο
σχήματι (*εἶ κεν μὲν ῥόβοτοι ψυχὴν τοι ἔχοντο*)
οὕτως μὲν συνεχῶς Φράντην ῥοβότον ἐφίλησεν. (280)
Ἄλλ' οὐ Φράντα μεταφρήζων πλεῖν μιν φιλεῖ αὐτὸν
(*ὥς αὐτὴν – τόδε οἱ κελανή⁷⁷⁷ κήρ εἶσατο εἶναι*).

⁷⁷⁴ Destroying the *new* body in preference for the *old* one, **New vs. Old**.

⁷⁷⁵ We might be reminded of Virgil *Aeneid* 4.440-449; cf. also Catullus 8.11-12, 60.3, Propertius 1.14.18 for specific references to *hard* hearts and/or minds.

⁷⁷⁶ = στρατήγημα.

⁷⁷⁷ = κελαινός.

So he spoke, and suddenly he went running to the black vessel, and seized a phaser from the robot Ivo's hand, and having quickly chosen his target, he shot his new body. Once hit, he immediately became transparent like a mist, and then Melis became invisible and was no more, but the translator Franta kept his heart firm. This is how Eros blinds both all the wise and idiotic alike, and it makes all the wisest stratagems fruitless. The body that Franta had purchased with his memory of languages had now become invisible and was no more, even though it was expensive, it was also good for nothing. The only lucky thing was that the chief computer, since the completely careless Franta hadn't destroyed its memory. And so we still had him, unharmed and in his right mind, which is why we could pilot through the boundless abyss. Yet this computer also didn't know anything concerning his skunk with the twofold and twin formation of his mind and soul (if robots can even have a soul), or even that he had immediately fallen in love with the robot Franta. But our translator Franta didn't love him anymore (as a 'she' – since it seemed that she had a black death).⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁸ This last line is a little obscure, the Czech says, “*neb to nebyla ona — to smrti se černou mu zdálo*”.

Πολλάκι νῦν Φράντην λισόμην μαλακοῖς ἐπέεσσιν
 θέλξαι κομπουτῆρι μέγαν δόμεναι πάλιν ἀρχὴν
 αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄλλων ροβότων ἐτάρους καὶ ἐγείρειν (285)
 ὥς ἵνα καὶ δυνάμεσθα πλέειν κοσμοιο βάθεσσιν
 ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων ἔχε μῆδεα φωτὸς
 καὶ γὰρ νῦν ἔθελεν πειράσθαι ἔργα ἐρώτων.
 Ἀλλὰ γε σὺν ροβότοισι πολλοῖς οὐκ ἦνδανε θυμῷ.
 Ἦσαν μὲν πλάνη θῆρές τινες οὐ μεγάλοι γε (290)
 ἢ πλαστοί περ ἔσαν ἦτ' αὐτόγονοι ἐπὶ πλάνη
 πρὶν μὲν οἱ ρόβοτοί τοι ἀποικίην ἐποίησαν.
 Οἱ μὲν ἔσαν γαλήης ἢ αἰλούροισι ὅμοιοι
 ἄρσενα καὶ θήλη· Φράντης γήθησε φίλον κῆρ.
 Ἦρξε δὲ θηλείας Φράντης ρόβोटος θηρῆσαι (295)
 καὶ τὰς πορνεύειν· αἰσχρὸς καταπῦγος ἔτυκτο
 χαῦλος καὶ χαλαρὸς καὶ καὶ οὐδενός οἱ μὲν ἔμελλεν.
 Ἦμασι μὲν Φράντης ηὔδεν παρὰ νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 ἀλλὰ γε νυκτέσσιν οἷχευεν θήλεα θηρῶν
 πολλάκι δ' ἀρσῆνεσσι δέον σχέτο ἱφι μάχεσθαι. (300)
 Ὡς πουλύγλωστος εἰς ἀντιδανὸν μὲν ἐτάφθη.⁷⁷⁹
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼν ἐζόμην παρὰ νηῦφιν ἀχνύμενος κῆρ.
 Ἀλλὰ γέ μοι μοίρην τρέψεν τι τύχης ἀνάλυσις.

⁷⁷⁹ = τρέπω (ἐτράπην/ἐτρέφθην).

I often begged Franta in gentle words to persuade him to return the mighty command over himself and the other robots to the computer, and to wake my companions up, so that we could sail through the depths of the cosmos. But since my translator Franta had male genitalia, he now wanted to try out erotic deeds. But being with robots didn't please his heart. There were some beasts on the planet that weren't large, they were either artificially constructed or natives on the planet from before the robots made it their colony. They were similar to weasels or cats, both male and female, and Franta's dear heart rejoiced. The robot Franta began to chase the females and fornicated with them, since he'd become shamefully lustful, frivolous, slack, and nothing gave him cause for concern. And Franta slept during the day in our black ship, but at night he mated with female animals, and often needed to possess the strength to fight with the males in battle. This is how the polyglot was turned into a worthless creature. But I sat in the ship with grief in my heart. But some resolution of fate turned my fate.

Ἦσκον δ' εἰν πλάνη ρόβοτοί τινες ὡς θηρευταὶ
οἱ μὲν καὶ παγίδας τεύξαν τῆσιν γαλέησιν (305)
οὐ γὰρ θηρία ἀλλὰ γ' ἔσαν πλάνου ἐνὶ χώρῃ
ἀλλὰ γε οἱ ρόβοτοί εἶχον προγράματα θηρᾶν.
Τοῦνεκα τὰς γαλέας θήρησαν οὐ κατὰ κέρδος
ἀλλ' ὅτι θηρεύειν ρόβοτοί προγραμμαμένοι ἦσαν.
Οἶδε παγὶν τεύξαν πολύμητιν τῆσι γαλήσιν (310)
ἀρρήνεσσιν ἐπεὶ δέλεαρ τὸ θῆλυ τέθηκαν.
Ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων πέσεν εἰς παγὶν αὐτῶν
καὶ δέ τε μιν ταύτη γε παγὶς λάβε τὴν ποδὸς ἄκρην
τὸν πόδα μιν κατέαξε παγὶς στερεοῖσιν ὁδουσιν.
Σμερδαλέως ἰαχέν τε λίπεν δέ ἐ οἷστρος ἐρώτων⁷⁸⁰ (315)
αὐτίκα ραδιοφωνήσας κατὰ νῆα μέλαιναν
Καίσαρι ἢ Μέλιτι πρὸς ἄλσος μὲν τινα πέμψαι.
Ἀλλὰ γε κομπουτήρ Ἰβῶ ρόβοτόν γ' ἀπόπεμψεν.
Ἄψ ἐ φέρεν ρόβοτος Φράντην βαρέα στενάχοντα
πρίν γε παγὶν μάρψας ἦσιν χερσὶν στερεῇσιν. (320)
Ἀλλὰ δέ νῦν δέον ἔσκεν ἱητῆρος σοφοῦ ἀνδρὸς
καὶ δέ τε Φράντ' αὐτὸς κόραμον σύστημα ἄνωγεν
ἱητρὸν δ' εἴλειν ἐκ τῆς ψυχρῆς κρυότητος.

⁷⁸⁰ cf. Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3.275-277, τόφρα δ'

Ἦρος πολιοῖο δι' ἡέρος ἴξεν ἄφαντος, // τετρηχῶς, οἷόν τε νέαις ἐπὶ
φορβάσιν οἷστρος // τέλλεται, ὃν τε μύωπα βοῶν κλείουσι νομῆες.
*"In the meantime, Eros arrived unseen through the bright air, full of
turmoil, as when a stinging fly attacks grazing young heifers—the
one cowherds call the gadfly."* (trans. Race 2009, Loeb 1).

There were some hunter-like robots on this planet who also manufactured traps for the weasels, since there were no animals on the planet's surface, but the robots had the programs for hunting. Which is why they hunt weasels, not for profit, but because the robots were programmed to go hunting. They manufacture tricky traps for male weasels, since they set down females as their bait. And then our translator Franta fell into their trap, and this trap caught the end of his leg, the trap shattered his leg with its strong teeth. He gave a terrible shout, and the sting of desire abandoned him. He immediately called Tsar (or Melis) on the black ship with his radiophone to send someone into the grove. And then the computer dispatched the robot Ivo. The robot brought him back, whilst Franta groaned deeply since he'd just clasped the trap with his sturdy hands. But now there was need for an intelligent doctor and Franta himself ordered the chief system to fetch the doctor out of his chilly cryostasis.

Αἶψα τὸ καὶ τεῦξεν καὶ ἐγὼ Φράντην μὲν ἄνωγον
 Βούρδην τεχνητῆρα ἐγείρειν σὺν θεράποντι⁷⁸¹ (325)
 ἀλλὰ ὁ κομπουτῆρ κόραμος καὶ ἐπείθετο μύθῳ.

Ἦρξε ὁ ἱητῆρ σκέλος ὀρθῶσαι ῥοβότοιο
 καὶ δέ τε νάρκωσιν τεῦξαι θέλε ἱς θεράποντος.
 Ἀλλὰ δέ μιν Φράντης ῥόβοτός γ' ἐπέσσειν ἄνωγεν
 ἐκταμέειν⁷⁸² τάχα μὲν γε (330)

πάλιν κλυτὰ μήδεα φωτός.

«Γίγνωσκω φρονέω» εἶπεν Φράντης πολύμητις
 «πάντα τὰ ὅσσα δ' ἔρωσ γε τετευχέν θήρεσι πᾶσι.
 Ἦδὺς μὲν καρπὸς δοκέει χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης
 ἔξω ἀλλ' ἔνδον πολὺπικρος⁷⁸³ σμερδαλέος τε.
 Ὡς καὶ νῦν μὲν ἔγωγε πέσον ὀλοήνδε παγίνδε (335)
 ἀρχαίην καὶ πρωτότυπον⁷⁸⁴ φρόνιμός περ ἐὼν θήρ.

Καὶ ἄλλοι γε σοφοὶ δούλησαν Κύπριδι λυγρῇ
 ὥς καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ὁ σοφώτατος ἦν μετὰ πάντων
 τετράποδος γυμνὸς μὲν ἐπώχετο οἷσι δόμοισιν
 καὶ δέ τε μίν γε Φύλις πόρνη ὡς θῆρα ὄχευεν (340)
 ῥάβδῳ πλῆγε πυγὴν· τόδε οἱ ὀργασμὸν ὄπασσεν.
 Ἄλλοι καὶ ἄνδρες γ' ὅχ' ἄριστοι ἔζοχον ἄλλων
 δούλησαν φαύλῃ καὶ οἰκτροτάτῃ τε θεαίνῃ

⁷⁸¹ cf. Cunliffe Homer s.v. ἱς 5, “ἱς τινος, *periphrasis for a person* (cf. βῆη 5).”

⁷⁸² = ἐκτέμνω, lit. ‘cut off’, but is also a technical term for castration.

⁷⁸³ Weise (2024:275) compares this opening passage to Sappho fr. 130.2 where the term *polypikros* is used to describe Eros.

⁷⁸⁴ Both *arkhaios* and *prototypos* have meta-literary resonances: the futuristic robotic skunk could still be tempted and trapped by the ‘old-fashioned’ ways of catching animals. **New vs. Old.**

He did it quickly, and I ordered Franta to wake up the technician Burda along with the doctor, and then the chief computer also obeyed my order. The doctor began correcting the robot's leg, and the doctor wanted to prepare a numbing agent. But the robot Franta ordered him in a speech to quickly castrate his famed male genitalia again.

"I know and understand,"

said the tricky Franta,

"everything that Eros has manufactured for all animals. From the outside, the sweet fruit seems to belong to golden Aphrodite, but inside it's very bitter and terrible. Just as I myself had now fallen into a deadly trap, an old-fashioned and primitive one, even though I'm a sensible animal. Other scientists have also become slaves to baneful Cypris, just as Aristotle, who was the wisest amongst everyone, went about in his house naked and on all fours, and the prostitute Phyllis mounted him like a beast and struck his rump with a rod: this gave him an orgasm.⁷⁸⁵ Other men, even the best ones by far, preeminent amongst the rest, are also slaves to the craven and most pitiable goddess,

⁷⁸⁵ This story is medieval in origin, not classical, and the image of Aristotle being ridden by a dominatrix became a common visual motif from the twelfth century onwards.

ὥς καὶ Μᾶχα⁷⁸⁶ σοφὸς βοιωήμων ὁ ποιήτης
 μωρὰς καὶ φαύλας γέγραψεν ἐφημερίδας οἱ (345)
 ταὶ οἱ αἰσχύνην ὅπασαν εἰν ἐσσομένοισιν.⁷⁸⁷

Ἀλλὰ δέ μοι νῦν χρή γε πεπαυκέμεσαι ἐπέσσι
 ὥς μὲν τῶν φωτῶν ἀτελὴς εἶη λιτάνεια
 βλαφθέντων ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς καὶ Κύπριδος αἰσχροῦς.»
 Ὡς φάτο Φράντα μεταφρήζων (350)

θεράπων δὲ πέποιθεν.
 Νάρκωσιν θέμενος Φράντη πόδ' ἐκήσατ'⁷⁸⁸ ἱητῆρ
 καὶ ὃ γε τῷ ῥοβότῳ τάχα ἔκτμεσε μήδεα φωτὸς
 ὥς καὶ μὴν γ' ἐπίτελλεν ἐπεὶ κεκάμηκεν ἔρωτων.
 Φράντη ἱησομένῳ νομίμως τὰ πάλιν ῥέε πάντα.⁷⁸⁹
 Καίσαρα κομπουτῆρα μέγαν θέλξεν ἐπέεσσιν (355)

Φράντα ὁ παντομεταφρήζων φρόνιμος νόμιμός τε
 ὥς μὲν ἐπεὶ δόμεναι μνήμην κατόχην ἐνὶ δίσκῳ
 εἶπων ὥς τὰ πρῶτα κακὸς ἅπο τύπος ἔτυκτο⁷⁹⁰
 πειθετο κομπουτῆρ καὶ μιν βούρδης πολύμητις
 πᾶν περὶ τῆς στάσεως (360)

Φράντου δέ τ' ἄφειλε νόημα.
 καὶ νόμιμως τετυκὼς Καῖσάρ μοι πείθετο μύθῳ
 καὶ διὰ τὸν πάντες ῥόβοτοι συστήματ' ἄλλα.

⁷⁸⁶ i.e., Karel Hynek Mácha (1810-1836).

⁷⁸⁷ Weise (2024:276) says that Mácha's diary was republished in 1993, the year that Křesadlo started writing the *Astronautilia*, with the previously censored sections now decoded, which "caused a small scandal Křesadlo apparently refers to" here.

⁷⁸⁸ = ἀκέομαι.

⁷⁸⁹ Lit. 'everything flowed back in the normal manner'.

⁷⁹⁰ Tsar has been, in a sense, **reincarnated**.

just as the wise Bohemian poet Mácha had also written a foolish and worthless diary that gives future people cause for shame. But now I must halt my speech, since there would be an unending litany of men perverted by lust and shameful Cypris.”

So Franta the translator spoke, and the doctor listened. The doctor repaired Franta’s leg once he’d applied the numbing agent, and he quickly castrated the robot’s male genitalia, just as he had ordered him, since he was tired of sexual desire.⁷⁹¹ And when Franta was healed, everything returned to normal. Then Franta the universal translator (sensible and behaving as usual) persuaded the mighty computer Tsar in a speech to return his memory that was stored on a disc, saying that a faulty copy had been made the first time, the computer obeyed and Burda of many devices extracted Franta’s thoughts concerning revolution entirely. And once he’d become normal, Tsar listened to my instructions, and all the robots and other systems through him.

⁷⁹¹ Weise (2024:276) compares the castration of Franta to Cronus’ in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (180-1), and the castration of Melanthius in the *Odyssey* (22.476), “*Křesadlo* inverts and parodizes these models, as in this case, it is Franta himself who, exhausted by the disastrous effects of sexual desire, asks for the removal of his genitals whereas in the ancient models Cronus and Melanthius are punished for their misbehaviour by others”; male genitalia are also the most prominent feature of male identity, and Franta’s willing castration can make us think more about masculinity’s importance within the *Astronautilia*.

Καὶ πυμάτως μὲν ἔγωγ' ἐσθλοὺς ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
 τοὺς οἱ μὲν ἦσαν μέγαλοιο κρυοῖο πεμπηκτοὶ
 εἰς ζωηρώτει τε κρεμασμένη ὥς κατέλεξα (365)
 πάντα ἐξείης μὲν ἔγειρά γε κώματος ἔξω.

Οὕτως πάντα πάλιν θέμενοι λίπομέντ' ἀπο πλάνην
 πρὸς πλάνην ψυχῶν μήνην Γρογαλὸν δέ τε μάντιν.
 Ναὶ γὰρ νῦν ἡμῖν ἦν σχήματα ἀστορπορεύειν
 τούτῃ μὲν χώρῃ κόσμου ἀπονόσφι ἐούσῃ (370)
 οἷα δέ μοι Φράντης ἦνεγκε παραίτησιν ὥς
 κλέψας τοῖς ρόβοτοις τοῖς μνήμην πρῶτα δέδωκε.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν καλεργέα νῆα
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμων ξεῖνον πλάνην λελιπόντες.

And lastly, my fine trusty companions, whom they had kept frozen in firm ice with their lives in suspense as I've described, I woke them all up one by one out of their deep slumber. And so, once everything had been put back in place, we left the planet behind in favour of the planet of butterflies, the moon, and the Grogal prophet. Yes, for we have now the schematics to sail there amongst the stars from this tract of the cosmos which is far away. Which Franta brought me as an apology, having stolen them from the robots whom he'd first given his memory to. The rocket immediately propelled our beautifully constructed ship, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving the alien planet behind.

Book P

*[Τὰ περὶ ληστήρων καὶ τοῦ Ἐλέφαντος καὶ Φράντου
ἀνδροποδισμοῦ.⁷⁹²]*

Δηρὸν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 πρὸς πλάνου ψυχῶν μήνην Γρογαλὸν δέ τε μάντιν
 ζητεῖν ποῦ μήλου καὶ Μανδύος αἶσα κίχεσθαι
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ πλάνου ροβότων φαύλων στασιώτων.
 Αὐτίκα δ' εἰν ζακενῶ ἄλλον γ' ἴδμεν μέγα πλοῖον (5)
 καὶ νῦν παυσάμενοι ξεῖνον πλοῖον προσέειπον
 καὶ οἱ ραδιοφώνησαν τ' ἡμᾶς προσέειπον
 χαῖρον καὶ ζητοῦν τινές εἰμεν κοσμοπορεῦται
 γλώσση ἄλλοδαπῇ τῇ οὐ χρῆνται κατὰ κόσμον
 ναυτῆρες χώρη ταύτη τὴν οἶδαμεν ἄμμες (10)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τῇ διεθνὲς⁷⁹³ Βρυθάνων ἦεν γ' ἰδίωμα
 ὥς καὶ εἰν σαῖ-φαῖ ταινίησιν⁷⁹⁴ δέ τε βίβλοις
 ὥς ὅτι εἰν κόσμῳ πάντες Βρυθανιστὶ λέγουσι
 ἄνδρες καὶ ρόβοτοι καὶ θηρία θαῦμα⁷⁹⁵ ἴδεσθαι
 οὕτως μὲν Φράντης ἀπαμείβετο φώνησέν τε. (15)

⁷⁹² = ἀνδροποδισμός.

⁷⁹³ From the modern Greek word for 'international', διεθνής.

⁷⁹⁴ In the modern Greek sense of ταινία, 'film, movie'.

⁷⁹⁵ Θαῦμα is often used in classical literature as a paradox marker, here the paradox is the universality of the English language in the sci-fi genre. The specific references to the sci-fi genre itself also shows that the characters in the *Astronautilia* are aware of the tropes of sci-fi and can project them onto their own actions (which is exactly what we saw in book 15 with the references to archetypes) without necessarily being conscious of the fact that they themselves are characters.

Book 17

*[The events concerning the pirates and the kidnapping of
Elephas and Franta.]*

For a long time we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos towards the moon of the butterflies' planet and the Grogal prophet in order to ask where we were fated to catch up with the sheep and Mandys, glad to have escaped the planet of robots, those nasty rebels. And suddenly we saw another mighty vessel in the vacuum of space, and I addressed the alien vessel now that we'd come to a halt, and it responded through its radiophone, greeting us and asking us what sort of cosmonauts we were in an alien language (that the sailors in this area didn't use properly) that we knew. But here the language of the Britons was international, just as in sci-fi films and books, where everyone in the universe talks in English, including men and robots and animals (a wonder to behold). And then Franta replied and spoke.

Ὡς μὲν ἐρωτήσεις καὶ ἀποκρίσσει περ ἄμειβον.
 Ἀλλὰ γε ναυτῆρες πλοίου τὸ κιχήσαμεν ἄμμες
 πολλάκι τῆς ῥημῆς γλώσσην φονοῦντες ἄμειβον
 αὐτοὶ ῥήτωρες μὲν ἄμειβον ραδιοφώνῳ
 ἀλλὰ γε τοῖς Φράντης μούνος πᾶσιν γ' ἀπόκρινεν. (20)
 Εἰς τέλος καὶ εἶπον ἓνα μὲν ναυτῆρα νοσεῖσθαι
 καὶ σφας οὐκ ἔχεμεν θεράμοντ' ἐνὶ νηὶ μελαίνῃ.
 Αὐτὸς πλοίαρχος ἄμε λίσσετο καὶ αἵτησεν
 ἡμέτερον πέμψαι σφισὶν ἱητῆρα σκοπεῖσθαι
 ἢ ἰδὲ καὶ θεραπευέμεναι εἴ τις θέμις εἴη. (25)
 Ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα.
 Ἦσιν θελγόμενος ἔπεσιν τοῖς ἄνδρα πέπομπα
 νηὸς ἱητῆρά γ' ἐμῆς τοῦ ἀλεξέμεναί ἐ.
 Τῷδ' Ἐλέφας ὄνομ' ἔσκε τέ μιν καλέοντ' Ἐλέφαντα
 πάντες μὲν ῥόβοτοι καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι. (30)
 Ἀλλὰ τ' ἐμοίγε λέληθε τὸ πρὶν κλυτὸν οὔνομα λέξαι.
 Ἱητῆρ Ἐλέφας πλοίου σκαφὶν αὖτ' ἐπίβησεν
 – τὴν λοιπὴν· ἑτέρεην κλέψεν Κύπτης πολύμητις –
 ἄσκον χερσὶν ἔχων τὸν ἱητροὶ φορέουσιν
 ἅς τε παρασκευὰς τέχνης μὲν ἱησέος ὄπλα (35)
 οὐ μούνοσ' σὺν τῷ Φράντης ἦλθεν μεταθήτωρ.

And so, they exchanged questions and answers. But the sailors of the vessel that we happened upon often changed the language of the words they were speaking, and the speakers themselves would take turns on the radiophone, but Franta alone could answer all of them. In the end, they said that another sailor was sick and that they had no doctors on their black ship. The ship's captain himself begged and asked me to send them our doctor to give an examination or even give medical treatment if that was at all possible. And then our translator Franta translated everything. Bewitched by their words, I sent them my ship's doctor to lend them help. His name was Elephas and everyone called him Elephas, including the robots and my trusty companions. But it eluded me to mention his glorious name before. Our vessel's doctor Elephas boarded our skiff – the one that was left, since the tricky Kypa had stolen the other one – holding in his hand a bag that doctors carry their technical preparations and instruments of healing in. He wasn't alone, since Franta the translator went along with him.

Ἡμεῖς εἰν πλοίῳ ἐστηκότες εἰν ζακενῶ περ
 τὴν σκαφὶν ἥδ' ἐτάρους νοστήσαι ἐμείναμεν ἄνδρες.
 Ἐξαπίνης ξεῖνον πολοῖον μὲν ἔτ' ἥρξε πορεύειν
 ῥίμφα μάλ' οἱ νῆχον καὶ Φράντης ῥαδιοφώνῳ (40)
 ἔς-ῶ-ἔς πέμψεν εἶπεν κλεφθεῖς τετύκεσθαι.
 Αὐτίκα Τόλμα ἐμὴ ἥρξεν τὴν νῆα διώκειν
 ῥίμφα δ' ἐπεὶ πλέομεν κόσμου δνόφερον διὰ χάσμα.
 ἀλλὰ γε νῦν ἐρέω τὰ ἅ μοι Φράντης κατάλεξεν
 ἱητῆρ Ἐλέφας τε τὰ μὲν τύχε νηὶ μελαίνῃ. (45)
 Οὐδ' ἄρα ἱητῆρος ἔην δέον ἀστροπορεύτης
 ἀλλὰ γε οἱ ἔθελον εἶλιν Φράντην πολύγλωσσον
 τόνδ' αὖ πωλῆσαι μεγάλοισι χρήματι πολλοῖς
 ὥς ὅτι πάμπολλων Φράντης δέ τοι ἦν μεταθήτωρ.
 Οἱ ληϊστῆρες μὲν ἔσαν τοὶ ἀπείροني κόσμῳ (50)
 μασιδίως ἥλωντο δι' ἀστέρας ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὰ ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες.
 Τὸν δ' ἄρα ἱητῆρα θέλον βαλέειν ἐνὶ κόσμῳ
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τοῖς ἐτέρῃ φρονέουσι δοάσσατο βουλή·
 ἢ μὲν πωλῆσαι δοῦλον γ' ὥς ἀλλοδαποῖσιν (55)
 ἢ δέ τε μιν εἶλιν ἰδὲ καὶ ἐποιῆσαι ὄμηρον
 οὕτως οὐ ἐβάλον κόσμονδε κενόνδε βάθος δὲ
 ἀλλὰ δέ μιν γ' ἴσχον· γήθησεν καὶ Ἐλέφας κῆρ.

We stood in our vessel in the vacuum of space, and we waited for the skiff and the other to return. Suddenly the alien vessel began moving, swimming very quickly, and Franta sent S-O-S signals with his radiophone saying that he'd been stolen. My Tolma immediately began following the ship, and then we quickly sailed through the murky abyss of the cosmos. But I shall now tell you what Franta and the doctor Elephas described to me, and what happened on the black ship. The cosmonauts had no need for a doctor at all, but rather they wanted to seize polyglot Franta and sell him for a very large amount of money, because Franta was a translator of numerous languages. They were pirates that wandered recklessly through the boundless cosmos here and there amongst the stars, staking their souls by bringing misfortunes to strangers. So they wanted to chuck the doctor out into the cosmos, but another idea appeared to them as they considered their options: either they could sell him as a slave to aliens, or they could take him and make him their hostage, therefore they couldn't throw him into the empty depths of the cosmos, but kept him, and Elephas felt joy in his heart.

Τὼ δ' ἀρπάζαντες κραιπνῶς τὴν νῆα ἔλασσον
 ῥῆϊδίως γε θόρεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο (60)
 αὐτὰρ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἴσῳ τάσει ἐπόμεσθα.
 Ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων βιοραδιοφώνῳ
 τόν γ' ὄδ' ἔχεν κρυπτὸν τῷ σώματι ἥντε γάστρα
 ἡμῖν ληστήρων πέρι ταῦτά γε πάντα ἔνισπεν.
 Οὐσίαι ἦσαν γ' ἐξωτικάι ἐξοχον⁷⁹⁶ ἄλλων (65)
 ἀνδράσι πυγμαῖοις μέγεθος πᾶσαι ἐϋκυῖαι
 ἀλλὰ γε καὶ λάσαι ἦσαν θριξὶν βραχέεσσιν
 χρῶμα μέλαν ταὶ ἔχον πλὴν ὠπὸς λευκοπαρείαν
 μακραί ἔσαν κεφαλὴν λετπαὶ⁷⁹⁷ δέ τε σώματα ἦσαν
 τῆσιν γυῖα δῶ μούνως ἦτην ὡς κῶλα (70)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἔχον χήλας καὶ αἴρειν χρῆμα δύναντο
 ὡς ἐξωτικοὶ ἦσαν ἀτὰρ φρόνιμοι δέ τε θῆρες.
 Φεῖσπον ἀφικόμενοις Ἐλέφαντί τε θηρὶ ἄνεσχον
 καὶ μὲν τὸν Φράντην μεταθέσται ῥῆμα ἄνωγον.
 Εἶπον δ' ἠτηρι τὰ πάντα δόλον τετύκεσθαι (75)
 ὡς ἵνα τὸν Φράντην δελεᾶσαι εἰς πλόον αὐτῶν.
 Τοὺς δὲ διωκόμεναι νῦν ἤρξαμεν ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ
 πολλὰ δ' ἀρηομένοι⁷⁹⁸ μάλα γὰρ χόλος εἴλε ἅπαντας.

⁷⁹⁶ Subverting the epic usage of ἐξοχος, which is usually used to describe the pre-eminence of a person in a positive way, but here it is a pre-eminence in alienness: they *visually* stand out, rather than having any heroic quality that distinguishes them.

⁷⁹⁷ Both the descriptions *makrai* and *leptai* have meta-poetic resonances, especially to Callimachus, since his main aesthetic for poetry was *slenderness* as opposed to *big* and *fat* poetry such as epic. Here, the *length* of epic is achieved alongside the *slender* ideal.

⁷⁹⁸ = ἀράομαι.

Having carried off these two men, they rapidly propelled their ship, and it easily darted through the depths of the empty cosmos, but we followed them with the same force. But the translator Franta on his biological-radiophone (the one he had hidden within his body like a stomach) told us everything about the pirates: they were exotic beings, standing out from the rest, they all resembled pygmies in stature, but they were also shaggy with short hairs, they had a black complexion, except for on their faces which were white-cheeked, their heads were large, and their bodies were slender. They only had two leg-like limbs, but they had paws and were able to grasp things. This is how exotic they were, but they were also intelligent animals. When they arrived, they aimed a phaser at their captive, Elephas, and then ordered Franta to translate their words. They told the doctor that it was all a trick in order to bait Franta onto their vessel. Now we began to chase them with grief in our hearts, making many curses, for bitter anger had seized us all completely.



Ἴημος δ' οἰωνὸς κῆρκος στρουθὸν γε διώκει⁷⁹⁹
 ῥίμφα μάλα πτάμενος χήλας ἄς πρόσθεν ἐρεγνὺς (80)
 ἀρπάξει μεμαῶς ταχέως τ' ἄμφω γε ποτάσθην
 ῥίμφα μάλα πταμέναη ληϊστήρων κατὰ νῆα
 ὥς καὶ Τόλμα φέρειν ταχέως ἡμᾶς ῥοβότους τε.
 Ἀλλὰ κιχανόμεναι νῦν ἥρξαμεν ἀστεροπλοῖον
 ὄντων ληστήρων· μείζον τὸ τάχος περ ἔχεσκε. (85)
 Οἱ νῦν εἶδοντες ἡμᾶς ἐγγύς περ ἐόντας
 φείσῳ τηλεβόλῳ⁸⁰⁰ γε βάλλον τὴν νῆα μέλαιναν
 οὐδ' ἄρα τις λύμη γέγονεν· πυκνὸν σκάφος ἦεν
 ἄντι γε φεισριακὸν πυκινῶς ἀραρὸς τέχνησιν
 ἀλλὰ βέλος φείσρου ἐλέλιξεν νῆα μέλαιναν. (90)
 Ὅχθήσας ῥόβοτον μὲν ἄνωγον πυροβολήτην⁸⁰¹
 νῆα θοὴν τούτων βάλεμεν μεγάλου ἀπὸ φείσρου
 πίθετο πυρόβολος τ' ὅπλων μέγ' ἰθὺν' ἐπὶ νῆα
 σφόδρα γε νῆα βάλεν ὥς ἥδ' ἐλέλιξεν ἅπαντα
 καὶ δέ τε οἱ τρύπη ἔφανεν σκάφεϊ πολυπύκνῳ. (95)
 Τοῦνεκ' ἐγὼν εἶλον νηὸς στόμα ῥηδιοφώνου
 καὶ Φράντη ῥοβότῳ πλοίῳ ληστῶν ἐπίτελλον
 τοῖσιν νῦν εἶπεν αὐτῶν γλώσση ὅτις εἴη
 αὐτοὺς ἐκδίδοναι καὶ ἐμούς ἐρήρας ἐταίρους.

⁷⁹⁹ This simile is reminiscent of *Iliad* 22.139-142, the important simile that describes Achilles' chase of Hector. This simile was previously evoked in much of the same way (cf. *Astr.* 14.279-280) and in both instances the simile is transposed onto two spaceships. The simile analogises the spaceship with the human body when viewed in relation to its original Homeric context.

⁸⁰⁰ i.e., a phaser cannon (a kind of weapon in the Star Trek universe). Τηλεβόλος was previously used to describe a cannon at *Astr.* 1.177, 6.44.

⁸⁰¹ From the modern Greek word for 'gunner; artilleryman', πυροβολητής, especially describes one who shoots a cannon.

Just as when that ominous bird, the hawk, pursues a sparrow, flying very swiftly whilst stretching out its talons in front in an attempt to snatch it, and they both flutter about quickly, flying very swiftly after the pirates' ship, nevertheless, the Tolma quickly conveyed us, including the robots. But we now started to catch up with the starship of piratical beings, since we had the greater speed. Now once they'd seen that we were near, they shot their far-striking phaser at my black ship, but no damage occurred at all since our hull was strong, and was cunningly equipped with anti-phaser technologies, however, the phaser's shot did cause our black ship to vibrate. Vexed, I ordered the robotic gunner to shoot their swift ship from the large phaser, the gunner obeyed and directed our weaponry at the ship, he shot at the ship so violently that it caused everything to vibrate, and a hole appeared in her very strong hull. Which is why I seized the mouth of the ship's radiophone,⁸⁰² and ordered Franta the robot on the pirates' vessel to now tell them in their own language (whichever one it might be) to hand themselves over, as well as my trusty companions.

⁸⁰² *'The ship's radiophone's mouth'*, i.e., a microphone: we would expect Křesadlo to have used the modern Greek word μικρόφωνο, but the choice of the word στόμα ('mouth') again personifies the ship and portrays the ship's abilities as extensions of the pilot's own, cf. notes on *Astr.* 14.276, 14.279, 16.197, 17.179. (17.153).

- Εἴ μὴ βαλλομένους φείσῃ ψυχὴν ἀπόλεσθαι. (100)
 Ἦ Φράντης ῥόβοτος· οἱ ἀμείβον ἄφροني θυμῷ
 ἀλλὰ τὰ Φράντα μεταφρήζων ἡμῖν ἀποπέμψεν·
 «Εἰ μὲν νῆα θοὴν γε βάλοις ὅλοις φείσροισιν
 οὐκ ἄμμες γε μόνοι ῥά κίχωμεν κῆρα μέλαιναι
 ἀλλέ τε καὶ ὁ μεταφρήζων ἀνὴρ θεράπων τε (105)
 ὑμῶν μὲν ἔταροι μάλα ἄζιοι ὥς σοφοὶ εἰσιν.
 Τοῦνεκα παύσασθαι δίδομέν σοι ἀμύμονα βουλὴν.»
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼν αὖτις ῥόβοτον βαλέειν ἐπίτελλον.
 Σμεραλέως ἐλέλιξε νεῦς φοβερῶς χαλεπῶς τε
 καὶ ἑτέρη τρύπη γε φάνη σκάφεος στερεοῖο. (110)
 Καὶ δ' ἐκ ληϊστῆρας ἐγὼ διδόναι νυ οἶσθην
 ἀλλ' ἄλλον δ' εἶχόν ῥα δόλον κάψῃ πολυτύκον.
 Αἶψα δέ οἱ στόρεσαν τοι ἐπήλυγα⁸⁰³ νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 ἤλεκτρομαγνητικὴν πυκινῆς πραπίδεσσι
 καὶ μὲν ἄφαντον ἔφνυ πλοῖον ἀνακουόμενον τε. (115)
 Ἥμεῖς τοὺς ἴδεμεν πρόσθεν νῦν οὐχὶ δύναντες
 οἰσθήμεσθα ταχῶς θρώσκειν ἔμεναί γ' ἀπονόσφι
 σφόδρα διώκοντος πλέομεν διὰ βένθα κόσμου.

⁸⁰³ cf. Euripides *Cyclops* 680, taken from the scene in which Polyphemos has been blinded by Οὔτις (Odysseus, 'no man'), and asks the chorus where he has gone, and they say that Odysseus and his crew have used a rock 'as a screen'. Therefore, this intertext very interestingly casts Oudeis and the tolmans in Polyphemos' role, and the pirates that have stolen Franta and the doctor in Odysseus' role. We would have expected Oudeis.

If not, then they'd lose their lives by being shot by our phaser. So Franta the robot told them, and they replied with an irrational mind, but our translator Franta relayed their reply for us:

"If you shoot our swift ship with your deadly phasers, it is not only us that would meet dark fates, but also the translator and the doctor; your companions are very valuable because they're wise."⁸⁰⁴ Which is why we are giving you the excellent advice to stop."

But I ordered the robot to shoot them again, it caused their ship to shake terribly, fearfully, and dangerously, and another hole appeared in their strong hull. And I thought that the pirates would now give themselves up, but they had another very clever trick in store. With cunning minds, they immediately spread an electromagnetic screen over their black ship, and their vessel became invisible and unheard.⁸⁰⁵ We were not at the time able to see them in front of us, we thought that they had quickly darted off and were far off in the distance, so we sailed forcefully in pursuit through the depths of the cosmos.

⁸⁰⁴ I have previously mentioned the Great Purge of the intelligentsia in 1936-8 (cf. note on *Astr.* 6.169), but I think it is also relevant here, due to the importance that is put on intelligence (supply/demand).

⁸⁰⁵ i.e., silent.

Ἀλλά γε τῶν ἀνδρῶν νηὺς μὲν ληϊστήρων
 αἵτι μένεν γε τόποιό τε καὶ νῦν τρέψεν ὀπίσσω (120)
 καὶ ἔοι ἴθυνον ποτὶ πλανήτας δέ τε φοῖβον
 τοὺς καὶ ληστήρες μὲν ἴσαν ἀπονόσφι ἐόντας.
 Ἔνθα μὲν ἀστροΐδην ἠΰρον μικρόν περ ἐόντα
 καὶ εἰν τῷ ἔρυσαν μὲν ἐὴν καλεργέα νῆα
 θήρης αὖτις ἀποψύχειν τρύπας τε ἰῆσαι (125)
 ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς μὲν μὰψ φερόμεθα ἀπείροني κόσμῳ.
 Ἥμος μὲν φερόμεθ' ἡμεῖς τοι ἀπείροني κόσμῳ
 τῆμος Φράντα τε καὶ Ἑλέφας τε πάθον κακὰ πλάνη
 δεῖμά τε κίνδυνόν τ' ἐγγυὺς ἦν αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.
 Τῷ μὲν ζῶα ἔναιεν ἐοικῶτα οἰωνοῖσιν (130)
 μακροῖς· ἀπτέρυγες τ' ὀγκηρί τ' ἠϋτε ἵπποι.
 Τοῖσιν ἔσαν ράμφοι μεγάλοι αἰσχροὶ στερεοί τε
 ἥως αἰητοῖς ἢ ψίττηκοις χθονίοισιν
 τοῖσιν μὲν πτέρυγες μικραὶ τε συνισμέναι⁸⁰⁶ ἦσαν
 ἀλλ' οἳ ὥς παμένονι μέγα γὰρ θρώσκειν ἐδύναντο (135)
 οὐδ' ἄρα ἀστροΐδη κρατερὴν ἦν ἱς βαρύτητος
 ἀλλά γε οἳ κοῦφοι θρώσκησαν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 ἴφι ποδῶν τε ἐδὼν καὶ ὥς γε τὰ ὕστερα λέξω.⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰⁶ = συνίζω.

⁸⁰⁷ cf. *Astr.* 17.147.

But the pirates' ship stayed in place and now turned back, and they directed it towards some planets and a sun that the pirates knew were a ways off. They discovered an asteroid there, albeit a small one, and they moored their beautifully constructed ship on it to recover from the chase and repair the holes, but we carried on in vain through the boundless cosmos. And as we flew through the boundless cosmos, then Franta and Elephas suffered harm and terrible danger on the planet, and utter destruction drew near. For on it there resided creatures that resembled large ominous birds, they were wingless and stately like horses. They had large beaks that were terrible and hard like those that belong to eagles or parrots on Earth, but their wings were small and collapsed.⁸⁰⁸ But they were just like winged creatures since their leaps had mighty power, because the gravitational force on this asteroid was not strong. But they darted here and there nimbly by the strength of their legs and of something that I shall describe later on.

⁸⁰⁸ i.e., underdeveloped or malformed.

- Οὐδ' ἔτι τις ἀὴρ ἔσκεν μὲν ἀστροῖδαο
 ὅς γε ὅλος μὲν ἔην νιφάδος ἰδὲ καὶ κρυστάλλω (140)
 ἢ δέ τε πᾶς κτίμενος ἢ βάθει τοῖσι καλυφθᾶς.
 Οἱ γὰρ οἶωνοὶ νιφετὸν λευκὸν κατέδοντο⁸⁰⁹
 καὶ γε μέρει ὕδατος κεχρήσατο ὥστε ποτῆτι
 ἀλλὰ μέρος δ' ἠλεκτριάκῃ διελυσάατ' ἴφι
 καὶ τότε ὕδρογόνον θησαυρίζαν δ' ἐνὶ γαστρὶ (145)
 ἀλλὰ γε ὀξυγόνῳ κεχρήατο εἵνεκα πνεῦσαι
 οἱ μὲν θρώσκοντες τό γε ὕδρογόνον ἀπὸ πυγῆς⁸¹⁰
 ῥίμφα μάλα ποτέοντο ὑπὲρ χθονὸς ἀστροῖδαο
 οὕτως ἱς φύσεως αἰὲν νίκησε πάθημα.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ ὥς βρώμην ἀλλήλους οἱ γε φάγοντο (150)
 μικροτέρους οἱ μακρότεροι πικροῦ βιότοιο·
 Οἱ μὲν ὥς εἰδόν γ' οἶωνοὶ νῆα μέλαιναν
 ῥάμφοισιν στερεοῖς ἥρξαν σκάφος ἐξεναρίζειν⁸¹¹
 οὐδ' ἔτι τις πρῆξις ληϊστήρεστιν ἔφηνε
 φείσοις βαλλόμενοις (155)
 μάλα γὰρ πολλοὶ περ ἔεσκον.
 Ἀλλ' Ἐλέφας ἰδε καὶ Φράντης φύγον εἰς σκαφὶν αὐτὴν
 ὥς στερεοτέρῃ ληιστῶν νηὸς μὲν ἔεσκεν.
 Εἰς τέλος οἶωνοὶ νηὸς σκάφος ἐξενάρισαν
 αὐτίκ' ἀὴρ ἔφυγεν νηῦφιν ληισταὶ δὲ τέθηγκαν
 τοὺς μὲν οἶωνοὶ δάπτησαν καὶ ἔφυγοντο. (160)
 Τῷ καὶ ἐφθιθη⁸¹² ἠλεκτριάκῃ τοι ἐπήλυξ.

⁸⁰⁹ = κατέδω.

⁸¹⁰ This is how the cosmobionts navigate space, cf. *Astr.* 7.57.

⁸¹¹ This verb is often used to describe stripping the possessions (especially *armour*) from a defeated foe's corpse, again we have the personification of the ship as a body, and here its 'hull' is analogous to the armour worn by an epic hero: the ship is an extension of the body in the *Astronautilia*. N.b. also the etymological link between σκάφος and the word for space suit, ὁ σκαφοάνδης/σκαφάνδης.

⁸¹² = φθίω (aor. pass.).

But there was not any air on the asteroid, and it was completely covered in snow and ice, either because it was entirely comprised of it or because it was covered deeply in it. So the ominous birds devour the white snow, and they use one part of the water as their drink, and the other part they dissolve by the power of electrolysis and then they store the hydrogen in their stomachs, but use the oxygen to breathe with. Then leaping via the expulsion of hydrogen from their rumps, they fly very swiftly over the surface of the asteroid: this is how the power of nature always prevails over misfortune.⁸¹³ And they even ate each other as their food, with the bigger ones eating the smaller ones, what a bitter world!⁸¹⁴ Then when the ominous birds saw the black ship, they began despoiling the hull with their sturdy beaks, and no solution would reveal itself to the pirates at all as they shot their phasers, for they were very numerous. But Elephas and Franta escaped into our very skiff, since it was sturdier than the pirates' ship. In the end, the ominous birds stripped the hull from the ship, and the air immediately escaped from the ship and the pirates died, then the ominous birds devoured them and left. And then the electric screen stopped working.

⁸¹³ Homily/sententia.

⁸¹⁴ I've translated these genitives (πικροῦ βίότοιου) as a genitive of cause in an exclamation. It could also be a prepositional phrase expressing origin or cause with the preposition (probably ἀπό) omitted (i.e., '*out of/because of a bitter life*'), which is how Křesadlo seems to have translated it in the Czech.

Φράντα μεταφρήζων ἤρξεν νὺν ράδιοφωνεῖν
 ἐς-ὦ-ἐς πέπων δι' ἀπείρονα χάσματα κόμου.
 Ἡμεῖς πλείοντες φωνὴν καὶ εἵλομεν αὐτοῦ
 σύν τε τεταξάμενοι⁸¹⁵ γε πάλιν πλέομεν ἐ σαῶσαι. (165)
 Ἀλλ' ὅτε δ' ἀστροῖδην μὲν ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 φείσοις τοῖς ὀλοοῖς τοὺς μὲν κτάμεν τοῖδε φύγοντο.
 Πηξάντες δ' αὖτις σκαφὴν αὐτῶν νηὶ μέλαινῃ
 τόνδ' Ἐλέφαντά τε καὶ Φράντην μὲν ἐδέξαμεν ἔνδω
 γηθόσυνοι ὅτι τοῖς περ ἀμύναμεν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον. (170)
 Ἀλλ' ἓνα γ' οἰωνῶν Ἐλέφας θεράπων βάλε τόξῳ
 φαρμακοβαπτισθέντι⁸¹⁶ ἐ καὶ κτάνε καὶ ἔλε σῶμα
 καὶ ἄνα μιν τέτμηκέ τε καὶ μέμαθεν περὶ τούτων
 ὥς μὲν οἰωνοὶ γε ὕδωρ νιφαδὸς διάλυσαν
 ὄξυγόνον πνεύειν καὶ ὕδρογόνῳ δὲ πότασθαι (175)
 ὅσσα δ' ἐγὼ καὶ πρῶτον ἀοιδίασας κατέλεξα⁸¹⁷
 οὕτως οὐ φύσεως θαυμάστερον ἄλλο τέτυκται.⁸¹⁸
 Καὶ τῶν ληστήρων ἔλομεν τῇ νηὶ μελαίνῃ
 τήνδε παρασκευὴν ἣ ἐπήλυγα νηὶ ὅπασσαν
 ἡλεκτονμαγνητικὴν ὥς πρῶτα ἔλεξα. (180)
 Ἀλλὰ γε τὸ πλοῖον ἀπὸ ἀστροῖδαο ἔλασσον
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον τὸν ἀστροῖδην λελιπόντες.
 Ἐνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθυσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 πρὸς πλάνου ψυχῶν μῆνην Γρογαλὸν δέ τε μάντιν
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτον τε σαωσάντες καὶ ἐταίρους. (180)

⁸¹⁵ Tmesis of συντάσσω.

⁸¹⁶ Poison arrows, cf. Virgil *Aeneid* 12.855-856.

⁸¹⁷ cf. *Astr.* 17.146.

⁸¹⁸ cf. *Astr.* 13.378, homily/*sententia*.

Our translator Franta now began calling us on his radiophone, sending S-O-S signals through the boundless chasms of the cosmos. We detected his voice as we were sailing, and we sailed back to save him once we'd organised ourselves. And then when we arrived at the asteroid after sailing amongst the stars, we killed some of the creatures with our deadly phasers, whilst others fled. And once we'd fastened the skiff back to our own black ship, we welcomed Elephas and Franta inside, joyful that we had protected them from utter destruction. But the doctor Elephas shot one of the ominous birds with an arrow that had been dipped in poison, killed it, took its body, and dissected it and learnt about them: that these ominous birds dissolve the snow's water in order to breath its oxygen and fly with its hydrogen, as I have also described earlier in the song: and so there is nothing more wonderful than nature. And from the pirates' black ship we took the equipment that they used to spread an electromagnetic screen over their ship, as I have described earlier. And then we propelled our vessel from the asteroid, and flew into the cosmos, leaving the asteroid behind us. From there we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos, towards the moon of the butterflies' planet and the Grogal prophet, glad to have escaped death and to have saved our companions as well.

Book Σ

[Τὰ περὶ τοῦ τοῦ Γρογαλοῦ ναοῦ καὶ φυλάκων. Βούρδου ἀριστεία. Τὰ περὶ τῶν ψιττακοκενταύρων]

Οὕτως μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 πρὸς πλάνου ψυχῶν μήνην Γρογαλὸν δέ τε μάντιν
 ζητεῖν ποῦ μήλου καὶ Μανδύος αἶσα κίχεσθαι.
 Ἄλλ' ὅτε πρὸς πλάνην μὲν ἀφικόμεθ' ὥς πρὶν ἔλαξα
 μετρομένοις ἔπεσιν εἰν τῇ τοῦ θῆτα ἀοιδῇ (5)
 καὶ τὴν νῆα θοὴν δέ τ' ἰθύνομεν ὥς ποτὶ μήνην
 μίην τῶν πισύρων ἡ μούνη εἶχεν ἄῃρα
 καὶ τῇ κρυστάλλῳ μάντις Γρόγαλός γε κέκευθεν.
 Τὴν μήνην μὲν ἔπειτα ἀφικόμεθ' ἣ γε κέκευθεν
 μάντις τῶν Γρογαλῶν πηκτὸς σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσιν. (10)
 Βῆμεν ἵμεν ζητεῖν μάντιν γε πεπηγμένον ἄνδρα
 γνῶτη ἦδε ὁδῷ ὥς ἦμεν αὐτόθι τὸ πρὶν.⁸¹⁹
 Ὡς δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα τόπον μὲν ἀφικόμεθ' ᾧ σπέος ἦεν
 τῆμος θαρβήσαντες⁸²⁰ ἐστήκαμεν εἰσορόωντες.
 Τῷδε τόπῳ μεγάλῃ πυραμὶς γε εὐκτιμένη τε (15)
 ἔστηκεν ψυχρῷ ἰδὲ καὶ στερεῷ κρυστάλλῳ
 καὶ ἀπονόσφί γε τῆς ἦεν δ' αἰπὸ πτολίεθρον.

⁸¹⁹ Can be read meta-poetically, since this evokes the 'paths of poetry' metaphor: going along a previously trodden path is not novel.

⁸²⁰ = ταρβέω (ταρβήσαντες).

Book 18

*[The events concerning the Grogals' temple and its guardians.
Burda's finest hour. The events concerning the parrot-centaurs]*

And so we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos towards the moon of the butterflies' planet and the Grogal prophet in order to ask where we were fated to catch up with the sheep and Mandys. But when we arrived at the planet, as I had previously described in book eight with measured⁸²¹ words, then I directed our swift ship towards the moon, one of the four that was the only one to have an atmosphere, and where the Grogal prophet was encased in ice. Then we arrived at the moon on which the frozen prophet of the Grogals was hidden in a hollow cave. We went to go look for the frozen prophet along a familiar path, since we had been in this place previously. Then when we arrived at the place where the cave was, we stood gazing in terror. Since in this place stood a huge well-built pyramid that was comprised of ice that was cold and firm, and a distance from it there was a steep citadel.

⁸²¹ i.e., metrical.

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρύσας τηλεσκόπιον ἀπὸ κάψης
 καὶ δέ τε μιν ποτὶ ἄστυ ὀρεγνὺς⁸²² πάντα ἔωρων.
 Ἦσαν τῷ δ' ἄσει οὐσίαι ξεινόταται περ (20)
 οὔτινι τῶν θερῶν μὲν ἐπιχθονίων ἐϋκυῖαι
 τοῦνεκα καὶ χαλεπαὶ ἔπεσιν μοῦνοις διαγράψαι.
 Τετράποδες ἦσαν μέντοι καὶ χεῖρας ἔχουσai
 ἢε τινας χήλας· κεφαλῆς ῥάμφοις περ ἔχοντο
 ἀγκυλέους· κορυφῇ δ' ἀντέννας ὥς σκάρaboί τοι. (25)
 Τούτῃσιν Γρογαλοὶ θεραπευέμεναι εἴσαντο
 ὥς αὐτῶν δοῦλοι οἱ ὀρθοὶ τετράποδες τε.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ τῇσι πόλει τέχνη εἶναι εἴσαντο
 ὥς αἰ αὐτοματοὶ μὲν ἄμαξαι⁸²³ ἄλλα τε πολλὰ.
 Καὶ νῦν μὲν φανερόν πάντων τὸ σχῆμα τέτυκτο· (30)
 Ξεῖναι οὐσίαι μῆνην οἰκισάατ' αὐταὶ
 ὥστε τὸ πρὶν Γρογαλοὶ [διὰ ἣν οὐκ οἶδ' αἰτήν]
 ἀλλὰ γε τοὺς Γρογαλοὺς δούλους αὐτῇσι ποίησαν
 ἐκ πλάνου εἰλοντες ἕως ἄνθρωποι εἴωθαν
 ἀρχαῖοι λευκοὶ σὺν αἰθιόπεσσι βροτοῖσιν (35)
 ἀλλὰ δὲ τὸν μάντιν πηκτὸν εἴσαντο σέβασθαι
 καὶ νῦν τὴν πυραμὶν νῆον ἔπι δ' οἰκοδόμησαν.

⁸²² Usually for aiming an object in a specific direction we would expect *τείνω*, but this verb *ὀρέγω* is more suitable for a telescope, since part of the aiming process involves extending its length; which is something that *τείνω* *can* convey, but *ὀρέγω* has this as its most immediate interpretation.

⁸²³ This connects to the meta-poetic paths-of-poetry analogy I mentioned earlier (cf. note on *Astr.* 18.12), since Callimachus uses the analogy in a comparison of large wagons (*ἄμαξαι*) to a small chariot (*δίφρος*): the large wagons in Callimachus represent epic poetry (*Aetia* fr. 1.25-28, cf. also Pindar *Pythian* 4.247f., Hesiod *Works and Days* 285-294, Choerilus of Samos fr. 317 [*Supplementum Hellenisticum*, 1983:147]). ~~Here, it's notable that the (epic) wagons move by their own will (automatic), without a driver.~~

But then once I'd drawn my telescope from my pocket and stretched it towards the city, I could see everything. In the city there were very alien beings that resembled none of the animals on Earth at all, which is why they were difficult to describe in words alone. They were quadrupedal and they also had hands, or some kind of paws; crooked beaks were connected to their heads, and they had antennae on their crowns like beetles. The Grogals seemed to serve them as their slaves, both the ones who stood upright and the ones that walked on four legs. But they seemed to have technology in the city, such as automatic cars⁸²⁴ and many other things. And now the situation became completely clear: these alien beings have colonised the moon, just as the Grogals had once done [but I don't know the reason for this], but they made the Grogals their slaves, having taken them from the planet, just as white humans were customised to do in ancient times with black mortal men.⁸²⁵ But it seemed that they worshipped the frozen prophet, and had now they had built up⁸²⁶ the pyramid as a temple.

⁸²⁴ Continuing from the facing page, the poetic vehicle and the writer become one self-driving machine that produces poetry; for more on rhapsodes as robots, cf. Gatt (2024) 'Homertron: The Poet-Construct of IL. 2.489-90' (<https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350260726.ch-005>).

⁸²⁵ i.e., an interplanetary slave trade.

⁸²⁶ = ἐποικοδομέω.

Οὕτως νῦν χαλεπὸν γε δοάσσατο μάντιν ἐρείναι
 καὶ γὰρ ὁδὸς μακρὴ νῦν μασιδίῃ γε τετάρφθη.⁸²⁷
 Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς ἐθέλησα ἶδεν εἰ ἔνδον ἔχεσκον (40)
 κρυσταλλούπηκτον λάσιον καὶ ἀμυμόνα μάντιν.
 Βῆν ἵμεν εἰς πυραμίν. Τῶν ζώων οὔτι δ' ἔφαινε
 ἐγγὺς οὔθ' ἔμεναι· ὁ τόπος μὲν εἴσατ' ἐρῆμος
 ὥστε καὶ εἴσηλθον θύρην ἔταροί τε ἐποντο.
 Ἀλλ' ὅποτ' εἴσηλθον θύρην μὲν ἐγὼ καὶ ἐταῖροι (45)
 αὐτίκ' ἀναΐξας με φύλαξ ξείνος ἐπόρουσε.
 Ξεῖνον καὶ ἀτοπον θαυμαστὸν θηρίον ἦεν.
 Οὐδε τε μὲν μορφὴν στερεήν γε τό ζῶον ἔχεσκειν
 ἀλλ' ἀλλασσόμενον μὲν ἔην καὶ ὅμοιον ἀμοιβῇ
 καὶ δία ἔσκε φανὲς⁸²⁸ καὶ λάμπετο ἥντε φλέγμα (50)
 ἐσσύμεον τόδ' ἄλυσα ἀτὰρ πέσε εἰς ἓνα φῶτα
 καὶ δέ τε μιν ζωὴν θηλήσαι⁸²⁹ εἴσατο ἡμῖν.
 Ὡς ὅδε θῆρ τεῦξεν ράμφοι ξεῖνον διαφάντα
 καὶ τρυφεν δ' ἔταρον καὶ μιν κτάνε θαόμενος ὥς.
 Αὐτίκα καὶ αὐτὸς μεῖζων φῶ λαμπρότερός τε. (55)
 Ἥμεῖς φείσοισιν μὲν ἀποσταδὰ οὐλομένοισιν
 βάλλομεν· ἀσκηθὴς θῆρ ἀγρότατος μενέαινε
 ἀλλὰ τότε· ἠὲ ξήθη τὸ πέλωρ ἀπὸ βλήματ' ἐκάστω
 αὐτίκα δ' ἐσσύμενος ἕτερον κτάνε λάβρακα⁸³⁰ φῶτα.

⁸²⁷ The meaning of this verb is obscure in this context, the Czech translates it as “*jevíla*” (‘*it appears/seems*’), could be translated as an aside, ‘*when formerly we were joyful*’ (?)

⁸²⁸ The tmesis of διαφανής enclosing ἔσκε emphasises the creature’s transparency mimetically.

⁸²⁹ = θηλάζω.

⁸³⁰ cf. *Astr.* 14.333.

So now it seemed difficult to ask the prophet a question, and so our long journey seemed pointless now. But regardless, I wanted to see if inside they had the shaggy and excellent prophet that was cryogenically frozen. I entered the pyramid. None of the creatures appeared to be anywhere nearby, the place seemed deserted, so I entered a door, and my companions followed. But when my companions and I entered the door, an alien guard immediately leapt up and marched over. He was a strange, unusual, and wonderful animal. This creature had no solid shape, but it was changing itself like an amoeba, and it was transparent and shone like a flame, and I ran away when it darted at us, but it fell on one of my men, and it seemed to us that he was sucking the life from him. Since this animal made his alien beak translucent and drilled into my companion and killed him whilst I marvelled. It immediately grew larger and brighter. We shot it with our deadly phasers from a distance, and the very furious animal remained unscathed, but then the monster increased in size from each shot and immediately darted and killed another experienced man.

- Ἡμεῖς μὲν φοβεροὶ τρέμομεν κλυτὰ γυῖα ἕκαστος. (60)
 Αὐτίκα τεχνητὴρ Βούρδης ἰαχῇ ἐγέλασεν
 καὶ τί γε σὺν φείσῳ τῷδ' αὐτοῦ αἶψα ποίησε
 καὶ στόχον αὐτε ἔλων σκανδάλλην μὲν ἐπίησεν.⁸³¹
 Αὐτίκα θῆρα μέγαν ἀνὰ φείσου ἱς ἐρόφησεν
 καὶ οὐ πλὴν μὲν ἔην· ὅδ' ἐπεύχετο Βοῦρδα λόγοισιν· (65)
 «Οὐκ ἀρετᾶ κακὰ ἔργα⁸³² ἐπίσταθαι περὶ τέχνων
 ὥς καὶ ἐγὼ μὲν ἐπιστάμενος κτάνων αἰσχροὶ πέλωρα
 ὅς δ' ἦν οὐκ ὕλῃ κτίμενος ~ ἀλλ' εἰνεργεῖν
 βαλλόμενος φείσῳ πλείην ὑποδέξατο ἵνα
 οὕτως κανότατοις ὄπλοις οὐ μόρσιμος ἦεν. (70)
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ σῶφρων φείσοιο πόλους ἀνάτρεψα
 καὶ τότε ἐνεργεῖν θήλησιν ἄψ ἐνὶ φείσῳ.
 Τοῦτο δὲ μὴ πλοίαρχος ἀνὴρ μὴ καὶ θεράπων γε
 μήδε μεταφρήζων πάντων ἐνὶ χάσματι γλώσσων
 ἐργέμεναί γε δύναιτο· τὸ γὰρ τέχνων κλέος ἐστί.» (75)
 Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ Βούρδης ὄρνυτο γέλωτα ἅπασιν.
 Ἀλλ' οὐ δὴν ὅτι τῷ ἐτάρῳ κτάνε θηρίον ἄμμι.
 Τῷ μὲν φείσοισιν θαλερὸν κάτα δάκρυ χέοντες
 τρέψαμεν εἰς οὐδέν· οὐ καιρὸς ἔσκε τάφοιο.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἵμεν ζητεῖν Γρογαλὸν κρυσταλλοπέπηκον. (80)

⁸³¹ = πιέζω.

⁸³² cf. *Astr.* 5.122; cf. *Odyssey* 8.329-32 of Ares caught in Hephaestus' net: οὐκ ἀρετᾶ κακὰ ἔργα· κιχάνει τοι βραδὺς ὠκύν, // ὥς καὶ νῦν Ἥφαιστος ἐὼν βραδὺς εἶλεν Ἄρηα // ὠκυτότατον περ ἐόντα θεῶν οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν, // χολὸς ἐὼν τέχνῃσι· τὸ καὶ μοιχάγρι' ὀφέλλει. ("Ill deeds do not win out. The slow catches the swift; just as now Hephaestus, slow as he is, has caught Ares even though he is the swiftest of the gods who hold Olympus. Lame, he has caught him by craft. Ares must pay for his adultery" [trans. Murray 1919, Loeb 104]).

Then we each trembled in fear in our glorious limbs. But the technician Burda immediately shouted in laughter and did something at once with his own phaser, and having chosen his target, he pulled the trigger. The force of the phaser immediately hoovered up the mighty beast, and it was no more, then Burda boasted in these words:

“The wicked deeds that concern having the scientific knowledge of technology don’t prosper, because it was through scientific understanding that I have slain the shameful monster that was not formed out of matter ~ but out of energy, and once shot with my phaser it received more strength, and so it was not fated to die from the most innovative weapons. But I wisely reversed the polarities of the phaser and then sucked its energy back into the phaser. Neither the ship’s captain, nor the doctor, nor the translator of all the languages in the abysses could have done this! This is the glory of technology!”

So Burda spoke, and laughter rose up in us all. But not for long, because the animal had killed two of our companions. We turned these two into nothing with our phasers as we shed fresh tears, since this was not the right time for a burial. Then we went to seek the cryogenically frozen Grogal.

Τὸν μὲν τῷ ἐνὶ νηῷ ἐλευσάμθ' ὄμβριμον ἄνδρα
 κείμενον ἐν βωμῷ κρυσταλλίνῳ ἐπεπηκτὸν
 λαμπρῷ διαφανεῖ στερεῷ καὶ ὡς ὑαλίνῳ
 ἅμφι δύω θῆρες εἰνεργεῖοί ἐφύλασσον.
 Τὼ ἂν' ἀνὴρ Βούρδης ἅψ εἰς φεῖσρον ἐρόφησεν. (85)
 Αὐτὰρ νῦν θέλομεν μάντιν τὸν ἀμύμον' ἐρεῖναι
 ἠλεκτρῶδαςοὶ κρόταφοις ὡς πρίν γε τίθεντες⁸³³
 ἀλλὰ γε νῦν πηκτὸς βωμῷ κρυσταλλίνῳ γὰρ ἔεσκεν.
 Καὶ εἰν τῷ βωμῷ μὲν ἐλευσάμεθ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
 γράμμασιν ἀλλότοποις ἔπεα γεγραμμένα κεῖσθαι. (90)
 Ταῦτα γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων κούφως καὶ ἀνάγνω⁸³⁴
 καὶ ἡμῖν εἶπεν κλυτὸν οὔνομα τοῦ Γρογαλοῖο.
 Τῷ μὲν οὔνομ' ἔεσκεν Ὀνόφριος⁸³⁵ ὥς λάσιος ἦν
 καὶ μεγάλην διδαχὴν Γρογαλοῦ αὐτοῖο ἐδείκνυ.
 Ὡς μὲν ἡμετέρῃ αἰώνεσιν ἀρχαιοῖσιν (95)
 ἔσκεν Γῆ ἁγίος⁸³⁶ τις Ὀνόφριος ὡς ἐρεμίτης⁸³⁷
 λάσιος ὡς γέγονεν μεγάλῳ μὲν θηρὶ ἐοικῶς
 ὡς ὅτ' ἐν εἰρήμῳ ζῆσεν πολλοὺς ἐνιαυτοὺς
 ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Παφνουτίου ἐρεμίτου
 σκληρῶς ἄνθρωπος φρόνιμος γνῶναι ἐδύνατο (100)
 τοῦ φανερώς ἔνεκεν λάσιος Γρογαλὸς ἔλε κλῆσιν.

⁸³³ cf. *Astr.* 8.255-257.

⁸³⁴ ἀναγιγνώσκω is a technical word for reading (out loud), cf. note on *Astr.* 7.40.

⁸³⁵ Onuphrius was the name of a saint from the 4th/5th century who lived as a hermit in Egypt, he was reputed to have been furry like an animal (cf. Butler *Butler's Lives of the Saints: Complete Edition* 1990:529), he became the patron saint of *weavers*: a saint with a connection to *weaving* is very open to a meta-poetic reading, since weaving is often used in classical literature as a metaphor for poetic composition, as well as for 'weaving' tricks (cf. *Astr.* 18.151).

⁸³⁶ Modern Greek ἅγιος, 'saint'.

⁸³⁷ = ἐρημίτης.

We saw him in the temple, a huge man, situated on an icy altar, frozen, it was transparent like it was made of glass that was strong and bright, and two animals made of energy stood guard around it. Burda at once hoovered them both up into his phaser. But now we wanted to ask the excellent prophet some questions, we placed electrodes on the sides of his head as before, but this time he was frozen in the icy altar. And we saw with our own eyes that there were written words set down on the altar in alien letters. Our translator Franta read it with ease, and told us the famous name of the Grogal. His name was Onuphrius, since he was shaggy, and it displayed that he was very learned amongst the Grogals. Just as on our Earth in ancient times there was a certain saint, Onuphrius, who was so hermitical that he became shaggy like a mighty beast, since he lived his life in the desert for many years, and as we have learnt from saint Paphnutius the hermit, even a sensible man could hardly recognise him as human, which is why the shaggy Grogal has obviously taken this name.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁸ Much of this sentence is obscure, especially with the repeated use of ὄζ.

Ἀλλὰ γε ταῦτά γε πάντα ἅμι Φράντης κατέλεξε
 μούνως ἢ διδαχῆς οὔτις ἡμῖν φάνε πρῆξις
 ὥς καὶ Βοῦρδα ὁ τεχνητὴρ τὸν νεῖκεν ἔπεσιν.
 Τὸν βωμόν θέλομεν ὥς πρὶν σκαλέηυσιν ὀρύξαι⁸³⁹ (105)
 ἀλλ' ὥς τοῦ βωμοῦ ἐγγὺς ἤμεν ἐνὶ νηῶ
 ὅξ'⁸⁴⁰ ἰάχειν ἤρξεν συναγερμοῦ ὃψ πολυπίκρη
 καὶ πολλοὶ λύχνοι ἤρξαν καὶ σκαρδαμοσέσθαι.⁸⁴¹
 Ἥμεῖς φείσρουσιν κατάνοιγνυμεν μέγα βῶμα
 καὶ ἀρπάξαντες Γρογαλὸν φέρομεν ποτὶ νῆα. (110)
 Αἱ μὲν τετράποδες οὐσῖαι τὸν ποτὶ νηὸν
 αἶψα θόον πολλαὶ εἰν ἦσιν αὐτοκίνητοις
 σμερδαλέῃ ἰαχῇ συναγερμοῦ ὥς ἐνὶ Γαίῃ
 ἄνερές οἱ πυροσβεσταὶ μὲν ὄχεσφιν ἔχουσιν.
 Ἥμεῖς μὲν θέομεν τάχα τῆς μήνης πεδίοιο (115)
 ἄνδρα μέγαν Γρογαλὸν φέρομεν μάλα ῥηϊδίως περ
 κουφοτέρῃ μῆνι μὲν ἔην ἢ ἱς βαρύτητος
 ἀῆρα σχέσθαι ἱκανή περ ἀλλὰ θέεσθαι
 φωτὶ ἐπιχθονίῳ πρόφρων ἦν ἡὲ ἄλεσθαι.
 Ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο φευγομένοισιν. (120)
 Ὡς μὲν τετράποδες τοῖς αὐτοκίνησι φέροντο.

⁸³⁹ cf. *Astr.* 8.250.

⁸⁴⁰ = ὅσσα (?), the whole verse is a little obscure.

⁸⁴¹ = σκαρδαμύσσω.

Franta described all these things to us, no solution appeared to us out of his learning alone, so our technician Burda chided him in a speech as well. We wanted to dig through the altar with hoes as we had done previously, but when we were near the altar in the temple, the warning voice of alarm began shrieking quite sharply, and many lights began to flicker. We broke open the great altar with our phasers and we took the Grogal to our ship once we'd snatched him. Then many of the quadrupedal beings hurried quickly towards the temple in their automatic cars with a terrible cry of alarm, just as fire-fighters on Earth do in their trucks. We ran quickly over the moon's surface, and we carried the mighty Grogal very easily, since the moon had a gravitational force that was too weak to possess a suitable atmosphere, but was kindly to Earthly men for running and jumping on. But even so, no solution revealed itself to us at all as we fled, since the quadrupeds were being conveyed in their automatic cars.

Τίς δὲ κύων Γρογαλὸς μὲν ἐπέσσυτο μακρὰ ὑάλλων⁸⁴²
 καὶ τὸν μὲν κτάμεναι μεμαῶς φεῖσρον κατόρεξα
 ἀλλὰ γε πρὶν πιέσαι μέτα τὸν θυμόν περ ἔβαλλον
 καὶ μιν τὴν κεφαλὴν στερεῶ σκαλεέθρῳ ἔκονα (125)
 τεθνηκόντα φέρον Γρογαλὸν λάσιον δ' ἐνὶ χειρὶ
 ῥηϊδίως κοῦφον ἔνεκεν ἴνος βαρύτητος
 ἀλλὰ γε τετράποδες ἡμῖν νῦν ἐγγὺς ἔεσκον.
 Καὶ ἦρξαν βάλεμεν ἡμᾶς φείσροις ὀλοοῖσιν.
 Ἐνθα δ' ὅλη γε ὑπηρεσίῃ νηὸς κεν ὀλέσση (130)
 εἰ μὴ τὸν Βούρδην πυκινὰ φρεσὶν εἰδότα φῶτα.
 Ἀσκῶ ἀεικελίῳ τὸν μὲν φέρε τὴν λάβε βόμβην
 δακρυποιητὴν καὶ τὴν ἦκεν⁸⁴³ τε τραπόδεσσιν
 αὐτίκ' ἀῆρ δνοφέρος ἦρξεν βόμβης ἀναθρῶσκειν
 ἡμᾶς κρυπτόμενος καὶ τὰς βήσσειν γε ποιήσας (135)
 σμερδαλέως ὥς πλεῖν ἀδύναντ' ἰθῦναι ἀμάξας
 οὕτως τὰς φύγομεν σὺν μάντει ἢ ἐκύνι
 ἄμφοιν τοῖν λάσιον – *(τόδε στιγμή ἄλματος ἔσται)*.
 Αἶψ' εἰσβαίνοντες καὶ ἐλάσσομεν ἀστερονῆα.
 Αὐτίκα πύραυλος ἔλασεν πλοῖον ἀνὰ χάσμα (140)
 ἐπτάμεθ' εἰς κόσμον ξείνην μῆνην λελιπόντες.

⁸⁴² = ὑλάω.

⁸⁴³ = ἴημι.

A certain Grogal dog rushed at us, howling loudly, and I aimed my phaser down at him in an attempt to kill him, but I changed my mind before I squeezed the trigger, and struck him on the head with a strong pickaxe, then I carried the shaggy, dead Grogal easily in my hand, it was light because of the gravitational force, but now the quadrupeds were near us. And they began shooting at us with deadly lasers. The entirety of the ship's crew would have perished in that place, if Burda had not been familiar with complex things in his mind. From the deadly satchel he was carrying he took out a bomb that produces tears and hurled it at the quadrupeds, then murky air immediately began to spring up from the bomb, which concealed us and made them cough so violently that they couldn't steer their cars any longer. And so we escaped them, along with the prophet and dog, both of them shaggy – (this shall be a point of bitter irony).⁸⁴⁴ We quickly put our starship in motion once we'd boarded, the rocket immediately propelled our vessel up into the chasm of space, and we flew into the cosmos, leaving behind the alien moon.

⁸⁴⁴ Lit. 'a moment of saltiness', Křesadlo uses this phrase to mean 'a serious matter'. Could be relating more to the metaphorical meaning of *sal* in Latin ('wit, sarcasm'), perhaps it implies there is something bitterly ironical about this, hence my translation 'bitter irony'.

Αὐτὰρ τετράποδες νῆας εἴσβαινον ἑαυτοὶ
καὶ ἦρξαν ἡμᾶς βάθεσιν κόσμοιο διώκειν
καὶ τε κιχανόμενοι καὶ πυροβόλοισι βάλλοντο
φεισροβόλοις μὲν τοι αἰσchrῶς πλοῖον ἐλέλιξεν. (145)

Ἡμεῖς ἅψ βάλομεν μεγάλοις τοῖς φεισροβόλοισιν
ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο φευγομένοισιν
πολλαὶ γὰρ αὐτῶν νῆες μίη δέ περ ἡμῶν.
Ἔνθα δ' ὅλη γε ὑπηρεσίη νηὸς κεν ὄλοιτο
ἡμετέρης σὺν νηϊ τε καὶ πᾶσιν ἐτάροισιν (150)
εἰ μὴ ἐγὼν αὐτὸς πυκινὸν δόλον αὖτε ὕφηνα.

Τὸν νεκρὸν γε κύωνα λάβων χερσὶν στιβαρῆσιν
κίστην πυραύλου τῷ νεκρῷ νῶτι πέπηξα
καὶ γε θοῆς ἐκ νηὸς ἐγὼ πτάμενόν μιν ἔπεμψα
τὸν λάσιον Γρογαλὸν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο. (155)

Αἱ μὲν τετράποδες καὶ ῥαμφοφόροι οὐσίαι
ὥς ἶδον τὸν λάσιον Γρογαλὸν διὰ χάσμα ποτᾶσθαι
τηλοῦθεν ἅγιον μάντιν τ' ὄϊον γε τύχεσθαι.
Ἐξαπίνης ἐδιωκόμεναι ἦρξαν ἐνὶ νηυσὶν
ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς ταχύτητ' αὐξάνοντες φυγόμεθα. (160)

Αὐτὰρ μοι γνώμη ὤρσεν φρεσὶ ὥς ὅτ' ἔχοιμεν
ληστήρων γε παρασκευὴν τὴν νηυσὶν ὅπασσαν
ἠλεκτρουμαγνητικὴν μὲν ἐπήλυγα πλοίων.

However, the quadrupeds boarded their own ships and began following us through the depths of the cosmos, and they caught up with us and then shot phaser cannons at us with which caused our vessel to vibrate violently. We shot back at them with our mighty phaser cannons, but even so, no solution appeared to us at all as we fled, since they had many ships, but we only had one. The entirety of the ship's crew would have perished in that place, including our ship and all my companions, if I myself had not woven another cunning trick. Grasping the dead dog with my strong hand, I fastened the jet-pack to the corpse's back, and I sent the shaggy Grogal flying from the swift ship through the depths of the empty cosmos. When these quadrupedal and beak-bearing beings saw that the shaggy Grogal flying through the chasms of space, they thought it happened to be their holy prophet in the distance. They suddenly began following it in their ships, but we fled with increasing speed. But a thought rose up in my mind that we had the pirates' equipment that they spread over their ship, namely their vessel's electromagnetic screen.

Εἴ τις τὴν ἠλεκτριάκην τοι ἐπήλυγα στῶσεν
 πλοῖον δ' αἶψα ἔφυν ἀνακονόμενον καὶ ἄφαντον (165)
 αἰσθητῆρσι νεῶν Βούρδης νύ μιν ἤρξεν ἐτοιμᾶν.
 Αὐτίκ' ἄφαντος ἔφυτ' ἀνακουομένη μεγάλη νηῦς
 καὶ αἱ οὐσίαι οὐ πλεῖν ἴδεμέν ἐ δυνάντο.
 Πόρρω μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου Γρογαλὸν μάντιν νυ ἔχοντες. (170)

If someone spread the electronic screen, then the vessel would become unheard and invisible at once, Burda now began to furnish it to our ships' sensors. Our mighty ship immediately became invisible and unheard, and the beings could no longer see it. We sailed onwards through the depths of the empty cosmos, glad to have escaped death, and that we were now in possession of the Grogal prophet.

Book T

[*Τοῦ Γρογαλοῦ μάντεως θέσπισμα*]

Εἰσαυθις πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου Γρογαλὸν μάντιν νυν ἔχοντες
 τόνδ' εἰς ψυγεῖον⁸⁴⁵ τεθήκαμεν ὧ δ' ἔτι τὸ πρὶν
 τεθήκαν ῥόβοτοι μὲν ἐμοὺς ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
 ἥματι τῷ ὧ μοι ῥόβοτοι τὴν νῆα κράτησαν (5)
 καὶ ἐτάρους θῆκαν μέγαλοιο κρύοιο πεπηκτοὺς
 εἰν ζωηρώτει τε κερμασμένη ὥς καλέουσιν
 ἄνδρες μὲν Βρύθανες «*συσπένδεδ*» τοι «*ἀνίμεισσον*»
 τῷ δέ τε ψυγεῖω Γρογαλὸν γε τεθήκαμεν ἄνδρα
 μὴ νῦν τεθνηκῶς θερμησάμενος σήποιτο. (10)
 Ἀλλὰ γε παύσεσθαι ζακενῶ τὴν νῆα ἄνωγον
 ὥς νῦν οὐκ ἴδμεν ποίην ὁδὸν ἀστροπορεύειν
 πρὶν μὲν πύθεσθαι Γρογαλὸν τὸν ἀμύμονα μάντιν.
 Αὐτὰρ φῶτε δύω σὺν ἐμοὶ λάβον εἰρωτᾶσθαι
 ἀστροπόλον νεκρὸν τὸν μήνη εἴλομεν ἄμμες (15)
 Βούρδην τεχνητῆρά τε καὶ Ἐλέφαντα ἱητρὸν
 Φράντα μεταφρίζων τρίτος ἔσκεν ἔπος⁸⁴⁶ μεταθέσθαι.

⁸⁴⁵ From the modern Greek word for 'refrigerator, fridge', ψυγεῖο.

⁸⁴⁶ ἔπος can also be translated as 'epic poetry' and 'oracular utterance', both of which are fitting.

Book 19

[The oracle of the Grogal prophet]

Afterwards we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos, glad to have escaped death and that we were now in possession of the Grogal prophet. We placed him inside a refrigerator which the robots had previously placed my trusty companions in on the day that the robots conquered my ship; and my companions that had been frozen in firm ice they put in a state of suspended life, or 'suspended animation' as the Britons call it. So, we placed the Grogal in this refrigerator, lest the dead man rot from the warmth. Then I gave the order for our ship to come to a halt in the vacuum of space, since we did not know what path to sail amongst the stars through now until we had consulted the excellent Grogal prophet. But I took two men with me to put our questions to the dead astrologer that we'd taken from the moon, namely the technician Burda and the doctor Elephas, our translator Franta was the third there to translate the speeches.

- Ψυγείῳ Γρογαλὸν μὲν ἔκειλον⁸⁴⁷ ἐσθλοὶ ἐταῖροι
 αὐτὰρ τῷ κρόταφοις ἠλεκτρώδας μὲν ἔθηκαν
 καὶ μιν ἐγκέφαλον ταύτης ὀτρύνεμεν ἦρξαν. (20)
- Αὐτίκ' ἀνὴρ κρυοεῖς νεκρὸς περ ἀνὴρξατο μύθων
 ὥσπερ δ' ἐξ ὕπνοιο βροτὸς τις ἦρξ' ἀγορεύειν⁸⁴⁸
 καὶ βραδέη γε βαρυφθόγγῳ φήμῃ ἔπος εἶπεν·
 γλώσση τῶν Γρογαλῶν γε παλαίῃ καὶ φθαμένη περ
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς μετέθηκεν ἔπος Φράντης μεταθήτωρ (25)
 ῥηϊδίως καὶ ἐπιτροχάδης μάλα ἠὲ κτίμενος ἦ.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἀνὴρ Γρογαλὸς ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδα.
 «Τίπτε σχέτλιε ζεῖνε μ' ἐγείρεις κώματος ἔξω
 δευτέρῳ ἦδε χρόνῳ; κάλλεζα⁸⁴⁹ δέ τοι μάλα πάντα
 ἀλλὰ μὲν οὐπὼς χρή τοί ἐστιν φῶτα ἐγείρειν (30)
 κωμάτοθεν· οὐ πλεῖν ἐθέλοιμι βίον τε πάθην τε
 ὥς καὶ σοι τὸ πρῶτον ἐγὼ περ εἶπον ἔπεσιν.»⁸⁵⁰
 Ὡς φάτο· τὸν μὲν ἔγωγε ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπον
 [αὐτὰρ Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα.]
 «Ἥλθον ἄναξ σά γοῦνα λάβων καὶ πολλὰ σ' ἐρωτᾶν (35)
 μάντιν μαντεύειν περὶ Μανδύος καὶ περὶ μήλου
 κοσμοθεωρεόοντός ἐ κλέψεν βυσσοδομεύων
 καὶ ἐ φέρει γλαφυρὸν κατ' ἀπείρονα κόσμον ἀναύδην
 πάντα τὰ κινδύνων ὀλέσαι φαύλης πραπίδεσσι⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁷ = ἐξεῖλον.

⁸⁴⁸ Křesadlo uses the metaphor of a dream for the creative process (cf. note on *Astr.* 12.283), so it makes sense that prophetic utterances would come from someone who is still half in that dream-like state.

⁸⁴⁹ = καταλέγω.

⁸⁵⁰ cf. *Astr.* 8.264.

⁸⁵¹ cf. *Astr.* 8.272-277.

My fine companions took the Grogal out of the refrigerator, and then they placed electrodes on the sides of his head and began to stimulate his brain with them. The frosty corpse immediately shot up, speaking exactly how some mortal man would start talking at the end of his slumber, and uttered an oracle in a slow and deep-toned voice. In the language of the Grogals, ancient and extinct, but even so, our translator Franta translated his speech easily and fluently, it was very well done. And then the Grogal man addressed us in winged words:

“Why, unyielding alien, do you rouse me out of my slumber for a second time? Since I had recounted absolutely everything, so there’s no reason at all to wake a man up from his deep slumber. I no longer want life and suffering, just as I had told you in my previous speech.”

So he spoke, and I made my reply [and then my translator Franta translated my speech]:

“I have come, my lord, grasping your knees and begging you greatly to give us a prophecy as a prophet about Mandys and about the sheep who watches the universe, he stole her, brooding in the depths of his heart, and has carried her through the hollow, boundless, silent universe, threatening to destroy everyone with his careless mind,

- ὥς καὶ μέν σ' ἐρέησα τὸ πρὶν γ' ὅτε πρῶτα κίχησα (40)
 ἀλλὰ γέ σύ μοι αὖ αἰνιγματικὸν λόγον εἶπας
 πυκνὸν καὶ δνόφερον τόν μοι οὐκ ἴς ἐπίστασθαι
 ταῦτα περὶ κόπρον καὶ χρυσοῦ⁸⁵² καὶ τοῦ ἔπειτα
 χρουνοφόρην ὕλην κέρσαι·⁸⁵³ μυστήριόν ἐστι.
 Πέντε διαὶ χθονίους πλέομεν φῶτές γ' ἐνιαυτοῦς (45)
 Μάνδυν ζητοῦτες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἀλλ' ἔτι οὔτις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο ζητοῦσίν τοι.
 Εἰς τέλος ἄψ πλέομεν ἀνδρῶν Γρογαλῶν ποτὶ πλάνην
 καὶ μήνην ὅτε τοι τύμβη σπηεσσιν ἔνεστι
 λίσσεσθαι ἱερὴν τὴν ἱνά τε τεῖο πύθεσθαι (50)
 κρύπτον μαντεῖης πυρῆν⁸⁵⁴ τε ἡὲ λόγον τε.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐνὶ μήνῃ νῦν ξεῖνα πέλωρα ναίουσιν
 τετράποδες σὺν χερσὶν καὶ οἰωνῶν κεφαλῆσιν
 ἥως κένταυροι ξεῖνοι μέγα θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι
 τοῖς λάσσιοις Γρογαλοῖσι κρατοῦντες ἤῃτε δοῦλοις. (55)
 Καὶ οἱ τετράποδες περὶ σευ νηὸν πεποίηκαν
 καὶ ἐδόσαν θηρέσσι φυλάσσειν εἰνεργεῖς
 ἔκ κτίμενοις· τοὺς στρεφθεῖσιν φεῖσροισι κτάμεν ἄνδρες
 ἀλλ' οὔτις πρῆξις μὲν ἔην ζητεῖν ἐνὶ νηῷ.
 Τοῦνεκα κλέψαντες δέ σε θήκαμεν εἰς νέα κραιπνὴν (60)
 καὶ νῦν ἀστροπορεύοντες λισόμεθ' ἐπέεσσιν.
 Ἀλλὰ ἄναξ ἐλέαιρε· λίην δὴν ἀστροπόρευμεν.»

⁸⁵² cf. *Astr.* 8.289-290.

⁸⁵³ cf. *Astr.* 8.292.

⁸⁵⁴ cf. *Astr.* 8.288, πυρὴν literally means the core or stone of a fruit, but it is also where Křesadlo's word for 'nuclear' (πυρηνιακός) comes from, so it could be translated here as 'nucleus'.

just as I had told you previously when I first met you, but you gave me a puzzling speech, a dense and murky one that I had no power to understand, the events concerning the dung and gold and then cutting the time-bearing material: it's a mystery. For five Earthly years we have sailed in search of Mandys and the sheep who watches the cosmos, but no solution has revealed itself to us yet in our quest. In the end, we have sailed back to the planet of the Grogals, and to the moon where your tomb is within a cave, to beg for your holy power and to learn from you about the hidden core of the prophesy and its explanation. But alien monsters are now residing on the moon, quadrupeds with the hands and heads of ominous birds, strange centaurs-like beings, a great wonder to behold, and they rule over the shaggy Grogals like they were slaves. And the quadrupeds built a temple around you and gave it to beasts made of energy to guard, we men killed them with our inverted phasers, but there no opportunity for us to ask you anything in the temple. Which is why we have stolen you and have place you in our swift ship, and are now begging you in a speech as we sail amongst the stars. But, my lord, have mercy, we have been sailing amongst the stars for a long, long time."

- Ὡς ἐφάμην καὶ Φράντα μεῖν ῥήμην μετάθηκεν.
 Ἀντάρ ἀνὴρ Γρογαλὸς Οὐνόφριος εἶπεν ἔπεσσιν·
 «Τίπτ' αὐτ' ἀνθρώπισκε θέλεις σῶσαι ἕνα κόσμιον;
 πάμπολλοι μὲν ἐάσί τε καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀριθμός.⁸⁵⁵ (65)
 Ἀλλὰ γέ τοι ἐρέω ὅτι κέψας τετραπόδεσσιν
 ἐχθίστοις οἱ μὲν με θεόν γ' αὐτῶν ἐποίησαν⁸⁵⁶
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι ἴδιον Γρογαλῶν λαὸν βιαζοῦσιν.
 Τοῦνεκα γηθόσυνος μὲν ἐγὼ καὶ εὐχαριστείων (70)
 τοι τὴν μαντοσύνης πρώτης αἰνίγματα λύσω.
 Ἔστι δέ τις κόσμῳ ἀστηροίδης πότε πλάνης
 μικρὸς ἀλλὰ δέ τοι κτίμενος χρυσοῦ καθαροῖο
 τοῦνεκα καὶ πυκνὸς καὶ ἔχων ἄδην βαρύτητος
 ἀρῆρα σχέσθαι καὶ ζωφόρος τεύκεσθαι. (75)
 Οὗτος δ' ἀστροῖδης χρυσεῖον ἔχει γε πυρῆνα
 ἔξω μὲν σφύραδος⁸⁵⁷ προβάτων κεκαλύμμενός ἐστι
 σμερδαλίη δ' ὁδμὴ κράτει χρυσοῦ ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
 ἀλλὰ γε δ' ἐκ κόπρου βοτάνῃ θαλερῇ ἀπόφουι
 καὶ ἐν τῷ πλάνῃ μικρῷ πολὰ μῆλα μὲν ἔστιν (80)
 τούτῳ καὶ Μανδὺς ναίει σπέσσι γ' γλαφυροῖσιν
 ὡς ἀνὴρ ποιμὴν καὶ ἔχει μαγικὸν τόδε μῆλον
 καὶ χαλεπὸν δ' ἔσται εὐρεῖν μικρὸν τότε πλάνης
 ἀλλὰ γέ τοι εἶπον ποῦ Μανδύς ἐστι κεκευθεὶς
 ὡς ἐπιτηδείως ζητεῖν τε λάβειν ἐ δύνασθε. (85)

⁸⁵⁵ cf. *Astr.* 8.280-281.

⁸⁵⁶ The only gods that appear in person in the *Astronautilia* are implied to actually be mortals who have just been *assumed* to be gods; cf. notes on *Astr.* 7.147, 10.62-66, 13.25, 15.255.

⁸⁵⁷ A *spyras* is the term for the ball shaped dung that sheep and goats excrete; *spyrados* is genitive singular whereas *probaton* is genitive plural, which implies that we are supposed to imagine that this asteroid resembles a singular large ball of sheep's dung.

So I spoke, and Franta translated my speech. But the Grogal Onuphrius replied in this speech:

“Why again do you, homunculus, wish to save this cosmos alone? There are so many of them that they can’t be counted. But I shall tell you that you have stolen me from the hateful quadrupeds who made me their god, and they also exact their will on my very own Grogal subjects. Which is why I, joyful and giving you thanks, shall solve the puzzle of my previous prophesy: there is a certain asteroid in the cosmos that was once a small planet, but is also made out of pure gold, which is why it’s dense and has enough gravity to have an atmosphere and be capable of supporting life. And so this asteroid has a golden core, but on the outside is it hidden by a ball of sheep’s dung,⁸⁵⁸ and a terrible smell holds power on the golden planet. But a lush pasture grows from the dung, and there are many sheep on this small planet, and in this place Mandys resides in a hollow cave as a shepherd and he possesses the magical sheep.⁸⁵⁹ And it will be difficult to find this small planet, but I have told you where Mandys is hidden, so you will be able to find and seize him with an advantage.

⁸⁵⁸ There’s clear meta-poetic symbolism to gold hidden in dung, cf. Ennius T72, 107 (Loeb 294): the elegant refinement of rough poetry.

⁸⁵⁹ The analogy between Mandys and Polyphemus is strengthened here, since both are shepherds who live in caves with a favourite sheep.

Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν·
 ταῦτα περὶ ὕλης τοῦ κέρσαι ἔπειτα χρόνιοι.
 Οὐ γάρ τις χρειῇ Μανδὺν ὀρθῶς γε κιχῆσαι
 ἀλλὰ δέ τοι φεύζει τε διωκόμεναι δέον ἔσται.
 Τῶν ἔνεκεν νὺν ἄκουσον ἐπεὶ χαλεπὸν τὸ λάβεσθαι. (90)
 Μανδὺς φευγόμενος φεύζει εἰς τὰ προτ' ἐόντα⁸⁶⁰
 τοῦ χρυσοῦ ἔνεκεν καὶ ὄλβου χρυσογενήτη
 καὶ ὑμῖν ἔσται δέον εἰς προτ' ἐόντα ἔπεσθαι.
 Τοῦνεκα τοί γε δέον τεχνήματος αἰσχροῦ ἔνεσται
 τὸν χρουνοπλεκτῆρα⁸⁶¹ σοφοὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν. (95)
 Ἴσθι γε νῦν ὧς ξεῖνε χρόνου μορφὴν τε δέμας⁸⁶² τε
 ἀγνώτην πολλοῖς γνώτην παύροισι σοφοῖσιν
 οὐδὲ τέ τοι δύναμις ἴδιον τὸ νόημα λάβεσθαι
 ἀλλὰ γέ τοι δυνατὸν μούνως διὰ εἰδωλόν τι⁸⁶³
 καὶ ἄνα μὲν λογίης τινι ἢ παραβολήν τε. (100)
 Ἴσθι δὲ ὥς χρόνος ἐστὶ μέγας τοι ἢ ὕτε κίρκος
 καὶ δὴ ἐπιπολέα μὲν ἔχων ὥς κίρκοι ἔχουσιν
 μή ἐπιπολέη τό γε τοί γε τὰ ὄντα μὲν ἔστω
 καὶ γε τόδ' ἐσσόμενον βάσιμον ὥς ἐστ' ἀπ' ἐόντος.

⁸⁶⁰ Lit. 'flee into earlier things', i.e., the past.

⁸⁶¹ Formed from the verb πλέκω which literally means 'weave, plait, twine', but can also be used metaphorically to describe the **formation of narrative plot** (cf. LSJ s.v. πλέκω II.2), so there is a possible meta-poetic reading here. Compounds of πλέκω are also often used by Lucian meta-poetically to symbolise the fusion of the reader with the fictional world through sexual union (cf. ní Mheallaigh 2014:31); this is also something I discuss in my Cyborg Courtesans essay.

Weaving is also associated with fate in classical myth, the Moirai/Fates for example spin, measure, and cut the threads of life.

⁸⁶² Δέμας typically refers to a *bodily* frame: anthropomorphises the concept of time.

⁸⁶³ An *eidolon* is typically an *imperfect* likeness.

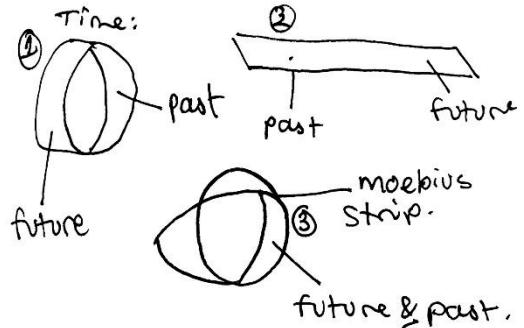
But I shall tell you another thing, and you should keep it in your mind: the things necessary for cutting the fabric of time. For it's no use in catching up with Mandys directly, instead he'll escape, and you'll have to chase him. Listen now for this reason, since it is difficult to grasp: Mandys in his escape will flee into the past on account of the gold and the prosperity that would come from the gold, and you will have to follow him into the past.⁸⁶⁴ Therefore, you will require a terrible device that scientists call a 'time-weaver'. Know now, o alien, the shape and frame of time, which is not known by many, and known only to a few scientists: it is not possible for you to grasp this particular idea, but it's only possible for you to grasp it through some likeness, and through an analogy or comparison to something. Know that time is like a large ring and has two surfaces just as circles have, let one surface be to you the past and let the other be the future, since it is traversable from the present.

⁸⁶⁴ Chasing someone into the past epitomises the theme of nostalgia that we find throughout the *Astronautilia*: embodying the actualisation of nostalgia.

- Ἄλλο τὸ παρηλθὸν οὐ καὶ βατόν ἐστι ἐόντος* (105)
ἔστι τὸ παρηλθὸν ἥως ἐτέρη ἐπιπουλῇ
τοῦ κίρκου· οὐπερ δυνατὸν περάαν ἐ διάμπαζ.
Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσι
εἰ καὶ ἦ χαλεπὸν μούνῳ βροτῷ ἀνδρὶ λάβεσθαι·
οὐ τάδ' ἐστι ἔως σοι μὲν ἀγωνίζομαι εἶπεν (110)
ἀλλ' ἄλλως ~ ὥς εἰ μικρῷ σὺ παιδὶ ἐνίσπεν
τί δ' ἐθέλοις τέχνων τάδ' ἔτ' οὐ γέ λαβεῖν τὸ δύναιτο.
Εἰ μὲν ἔχεις κίρκον κούφου παπύροιο τέτυκτον
οὗτος αὖ κίρκος δὴ ἐπιπουλᾷ περ ἔχῃσει.
Ἄλλ' ἰδὲ εἰ κίρκου σχίζοις τὸν ἀσκηθεῖα κύκλον (115)
ἄντικρυς τεύξεις ζώνην τοι ὥστε ῥυτῆρα
εἴ κεν νῦν γέ ἐνὸς τέλεος συζύγοις ἐπιπουλῇν
τὴν μὲν ἐνδοτέρην τῇ ἐξοτέρῃ ἐτέροιο
ἅψ μὲν ἔχοις κίρκον ἀλλ' οὐκ ἴσον προτέρῳ περ.
Ἔσται νῦν κίρκος στρεφθεὶς τοι σχήματι ξείνῳ (120)
ὥς τοι τῶν Ἀράβων ἐν ἀριθμοῦ γράμμασιν ἐστι
γράμμα τό τοι ὀκτὼ σημαίνει εἶναι ἀριθμόν.
Τοῦτον μὲν κίρκον γέ μαθηματικοὶ καλέουσιν
Κίρκον Μοιβίοιο· τὸ γὰρ μέγα θαῦμα τέτυκτο.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶⁵ The illustration opposite is my own.

The past, however, is not traversable from the present, the past is therefore like the other surface of the ring since it is not possible to pass right through to it. But I shall tell you another think and you should keep it in your mind, even if it is difficult for a mere mortal to grasp: it won't be like how I've been struggling to talk to you in, but in another manner ~ as if you wanted to explain to a small child something about technology that it cannot yet grasp. If you have a ring that has been made from light paper, this ring will also have two sides. But if then you cut across the untouched circle of the ring, then you would make a strip-like belt. Now if you should connect one end, namely the inner surface, to the outer one of the other, then you would have a ring again, but not the same as the previous one. It will now be a twisted ring with a strange appearance, just as there is in the characters of Arabic numerals a character that symbolises that it is number eight.⁸⁶⁶ Mathematicians call this ring a 'Moebius strip',⁸⁶⁷ and it has become a great wonder.



⁸⁶⁶ i.e., the infinity symbol (∞), which resembles the number eight in Arabic numerals on its side (8).

⁸⁶⁷ Lit. 'Moebius' ring'.

- Εἴ κέν τις ἐθέλοιτο ἐπιπουλᾷ φυκοῶσαι*⁸⁶⁸ (125)
οὗ γε δύοιν φῦκοιν κίρκον γράψαι γε δύναιτο
ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπιπουλῇ μίη μουνῶς οἱ ἔνεστι
εἰ καὶ οἷ γε ἔζω καὶ ἔνδον χρῶμα φάνεταί.
Εἴ κέν τις μύρμηξ βλώσκειν ἐθέλοι ἐπὶ κίρκῳ
*μούνῃ τοί γε ὁδῶ ὁ κνῖψ*⁸⁶⁹ *βλώσκοι κατὰ κύκλον* (130)
ἀλλ' εἴη γ' ἔζω καὶ ἔνδον βλωσκόμενος κνίψ.
Ἀλλὰ γε κνίπε δύω γε κατάντικρύς γε δυναίσθην
ἐξέμεναι κίρκῳ ὃ μὲν ἔζω καὶ ὃ δέ τ' ἔνδον
*οὕτως οὐ φύσεως θαυμάστερον ἄλλο τέτυκται.*⁸⁷⁰
Ἀλλὰ γέ τοι αὐτὸς χρόνος κίρκῳ ῥα ὅμοιος (135)
ὥς εἶπον πρόσθεν· καὶ εἴ τις ἀνὴρ ἐθέλοιτο
ἐκ ὄντος φύγεμεν εἰς πρῶτον ἐόντα χρόνονδε
κίρκον Μοιβίοιο ποιῆσαι οἱ δέον εἴη
ἐκ νομίμῳ· κίρκῳ χρόνον ὥστε πάλιν γε πορεύειν.
Τοῦτο τὸ φέρτατόν ἐστι ὅπως τοι ἐνίσπειν οἶω (140)
ἀλλὰ γ' ὕπαρ δ' ἕτερον σὺ οὐχὶ δύνη ἐλάβεσθαι.
Ἀλλὰ γε τοῦτο ποιεῖν χρεῖη τεχνήματός ἐστι
χρουνοπλεκτήρος· Μανδὺν δέ ἐσχέσθαι οἶω.
Εἰσὶν τοί γέ τινες βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
οὐσίαι φύσεες συλλεκταὶ ἀστράσι πᾶσι (145)
τὰς μὲν χρουνοπλεκτήρας κλήσιν καλέουσιν.

⁸⁶⁸ The verb φυκόω is often used to mean 'to put on makeup/paint'.

⁸⁶⁹ Lit. 'cynips', a kind of wasp, wasps are in the same Order as ants (*Hymenoptera*): this should be translated as ant, not cynips.

⁸⁷⁰ cf. *Astr.* 13.378, 17.177, homily/sententia.

If someone should wish to paint the two surfaces, then he would not be able to paint the ring in two colours, but it rather has only a single surface on it, even though a single colour would appear on its outside and inside. If some ant should wish to walk on the ring, then the ant would walk along the ring on a single path, since the ant would be walking on the outside and the inside. But two ants could sit right opposite each other on the ring, one on the outside, and the other on the inside: and so, there is nothing more wonderful than nature! But time itself, for your information, is therefore like this ring, like I said before, and if some man should wish to flee from the present into an earlier point in time, then he must make a Moebius strip out of an ordinary ring in order to journey backwards in time. This is the best way that I can think to describe it to you, and it's another thing in reality, but you wouldn't be able to grasp it. But this time-weaver is a necessary device for you to make, and I believe Mandys has one. There are some creatures and beings out there in the depths of the empty cosmos that have come together from all sorts of constellations, and people call them 'the weavers of time'.

- Οἶδε φυλακτῆρές γε φύλαξαν χρονοοδίτας⁸⁷¹
 εἰ μὴ οὐσίαι φρόνιμαι κόσμον γλαφυροῖο
 χρονοπορεύουσαι βλάψαιεν ἐσσόμενόν τι.⁸⁷²
 Χρονοπλεκτῆρας μοῦνοί τε δύνανται ἔχεσθαι (150)
 ἀλλ' οὐτις ἄλλος· τὸ μὲν εἶη παρανομίη.
 Ἀλλὰ γέ τοι Μανδὺν κλέψαι πλεκτῆρ' ὑποπτεύω
 καὶ ἐν ἀστροῖδῃ κεύθεσθαι τοῖς φυλάκεσσι
 τῷ γε μαεταλλεύων χρυσὸν πτίζων⁸⁷³ δέ τε πλοῦτον
 τήμῳς ἄδην τοι ἔχει πλοῖφ μὲν ἐοῖο φέρεσθαι (155)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἔπειτα θέλει φύγεμεν χρόνον εἰς προτ' ἐόντα
 πολλῶ σὺν χρυσῷ μῆλφ καὶ κοσμοορῶντι.
 Ἀλλ' οὐτις μὲν οἶδέ τι σὺν κόσμῳ γε τύχησῃ
 εἰ Μανδὺς εἴλοι μῆλον χρόνον ἐς προτ' ἐόντα.
 Ἐν τῷ ὄντι βλέπει μῆλον κόσμον ὅτις ἐστι (160)
 ὥς φέρεται χροῦνφ εἰς ἐσσόμενον δέ τε πρόσσω
 ἀλλ' εἰ νῦν ὀπίσω βλέψει εἰς τὰ προτ' ἐόντα
 ῥηϊδίως ὀλέσαι κόσμον τὸν ἐόντα δύναιτο
 ἀλλὰ τοι εἶν προτ' ἐόντι ἐὼν Μανδὺς πολυμήτις
 ζῆν σαφέως ὁ δύναιτο ἐπεὶ οὐτις ἐ διώκοι (165)
 οὔτε χρονοφυλακτῆρες οὐ καὶ σὺ πορεύα
 ὥς οὐ πλεῖν τις ζῆ εἶν χροῦνοις ἐσσομένοισι
 οὐκ αὐταὶ ὄραι ὥς μῆλον οὐχὶ θεώροι.

⁸⁷¹ Portmanteau of χρόνος and ὁδότης, i.e., 'time traveller'.

⁸⁷² Preserving the future state of things by controlling the past and the present; this feeds into the question of fate in the *Astronautilia*. After talking with Václav Z. J. Pinkava (21/7/2025), it seems that Křesadlo's conception of fate was that there are large-scale events that are meant to happen, but there are more variables on the smaller scale. This resembles the conception of fate that we see in Classical texts, e.g., it is a fatal constant that Oedipus will kill his father and marry his mother, but the how and why are the variables.

⁸⁷³ Obscure meaning, probably from πτίσσω, 'winnow grain', i.e., 'extract, acquire'.

They're guardians that keep watch over time travellers,⁸⁷⁴ lest the intelligent beings of the hollow cosmos that can travel through time cause some sort of harm to the future. They are the only ones that can have time-weavers, but no one else, that would be a transgression of the law. But I suspect that Mandys has stolen a weaver and has hidden from the guardians on that asteroid where he's mining the gold and extract wealth, and when he has as much as his ship will carry, then he will want to flee to a time in the past along with his vast amounts of gold and the sheep who watches the universe. But no one knows what will befall the universe if Mandys should take the sheep to a time in the past. Since the sheep gazes at the universe as it is in the present whilst it is carried forwards in time towards the future. But if it now gazes backwards into the past, it could easily destroy the currently existing universe,⁸⁷⁵ but since that tricky Mandys is in the present, he can live his life in the open, because no one can chase him, not the weavers of time, not even you, traveller, since no one would survive any longer in future times, nor time itself, since the sheep wouldn't be watching them.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁴ Beings that overlook time-travel and the manipulation of time is a common sci-fi trope, e.g., Time Lords in *Doctor Who*, the 'Time Variance Authority' (TVA) in Marvel, etc.

⁸⁷⁵ The nostalgic preoccupation with the past spells disaster for the present and the future (continued on following page).

⁸⁷⁶ Oudeis and the tolmanauts wouldn't be able to follow Mandys into the past due to the fact that they would no longer exist, since there would be no more present without the sheep being in the present too.

- Ταῦτα ὑποπτεύω Μανδὺν φαῦλον παρασκεύειν*⁸⁷⁷
οἶδε φυλακτῆρες ἢ οὐ τὴν κλέψιν ἴσασιν (170)
ἢ οὐκ εὐρέμεναι Μανδὺν κλέπτῃν νυ δύνανται.
Σοὶ μὲν νῦν δέον ἐστὶ τέ τοι κρατερῇ καὶ ὀφειλῇ
Μανδὺν ἀρπάζαι πρὶν τὸ προέονδε φύγεσθαι
ἀλλ' εἴ κέν γε φύγοι τὸ δέον τοί ἐστι διώκειν
καὶ μιν ἀρπάζαι πραέοντι χρόνῳ ἐνὶ γαίῃ (175)
εἰ μὴ καὶ προέοντα νυ ὄντα ὁ Μανδὺς ὀλέσσει
δηθὰ πάλιν φεύγων τόδε κῆρ ἢ καὶ προέουσιν.
Τοῦδε διωκόμεναί γε δέον τεχνήματός ἐστι
χρουνοπλεκτῆρος τὸν μὲν περ ἔχουσι φύλακες.
Ἀλλὰ δέ τοι δέον ἐστὶ πλέειν εἰν νηϊ μελαίνῃ (180)
πρὸς γε φυλακτῆρας· καὶ ἔγωγε τόπον ἔτι δείξω.»
 – καὶ μὲν ταῦτα ἔδειξε τὰ γὰρ οὐ χρή τοι ἐνίσπειν –
«Πολλὰ τε λισσεσθαι τούτων ὑψηλὰ κάρηνα
εἶτε γε κιχρῆσαι χρουνοπλεκτῆρα ἄριστον
ἢ αὐτοὺς Μανδὺν κρατέσαι ἢ δητὰ διώκειν (185)
ἢ δ' αὐτοῖς ἀνέκουσι σοφὸν κλέψαι γε τὸ μῆχος.
Οὐδὲ τέ τις χρόνος ἔστιν ἀφέσθαι ἢ μαλακίζειν
αἰσχρὸς κίνδυνος κρατέει τὸν ἀπείρονα κόσμον.

⁸⁷⁷ Continuing on from my note on *Astr.* 19.160, Křesadlo himself even believed that Pavel Mandys was a part of an older generation that was stuck in their ways, since his criticisms of Křesadlo were so reminiscent of the charges levelled against him by pro-USSR critics (Václav Z. J. Pinkava 21/7/2025).

I suspect that the worthless Mandys has made these preparations, and that the guardians either don't know about the theft, or they haven't been able to find the thief Mandys yet. So now it is necessary for you, as well as your mighty debt, to catch Mandys before he escapes into the past. But if he should flee, then you must pursue and catch him in a past time on Earth, if you don't, then Mandys would also destroy the concurrent moment in the past by fleeing further back, and the past would also face this doom. To chase him, you will need the time-weaver, the device that the guardians have. So, you must journey in your black ship towards the guardians, and I shall point out the place to you."

— And he pointed these things out, which is not necessary to describe to you —

"And entreat their lofty heads often whether they'll lend you an excellent time-weaver, or defeat Mandys themselves, or even chase him. And steal that clever machine from them if they're unwilling to listen! There is no time at all to let it go or be soft, since a terrible danger has the upper hand over the boundless cosmos!

- Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἔρέω σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσι·*
Εἰ μὲν τις σχίσῃ κίρκον Μοῖβίου ἄνακτος (190)
ἄντικρυς διὰ μῆκος αὖ οὐ κίρκω δύο εἴτην
ἀλλὰ μόνος κίρκος δις μηκότερος προτέροιο
ἀλλ' εἰ ἔπειτα πάλιν σχίζοις τοῦτον δέ τε κίρκον
κίρκ' εἴτην γε δύο χωρὶς ἀπονόσφι ἐόντε.
Εἰ μὲν σὺν γε δύνῃ χροῦνον κίρκω τὸ ποιῆσαι (195)
σωσεῖς κόσμον ἀπὸ Μανδύος δίπλακα ποίων⁸⁷⁸
καὶ νῦν τοι Μανδὺς μούνως ἓνα τῶν ὀλέσαιο
χροῦνον καὶ κόσμον· ἕτερος γε μένοι σάφα ὥς πρὶν.
Ταῦτά γε πρηζέμεναι χρεῖη σχιστῆρος ἔνεστι
τοῦ χροῦνον· καὶ ἐγὼν ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχω τόδε μῆχος. (200)
Τοῦτό γε καὶ καταβρύζα⁸⁷⁹ ἐγὼ ὥς κίνδυνος ἦεν
οὐσίης φρονίμης τινὸς ὥς κλέψαι ἐ δύναιτο.
Ἀλλὰ γέ τοι νῦν ξεῖνε θέλω δοῦναι τόδε μῆχαρ.
Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἔρέω σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσι·
οὐκ ἄρ' ἤν γε δύνῃ μοι ἐγκέφαλον κατοτρύνειν (205)
ὥς ὥς θερμὸς ἐὼν νεκρὸς τεύξει τάχα σῆψιν.
ἦμος νῦν ἥρξαιμι λαλεῖν τά τοι ἄφρονα ἔσται
σημεῖον δ' ἔσται ὅτι σῆψις ἐγκεφάλαιο
καὶ οὐ δὴν δυνατὸν μάντευμα σαφὲς ἀγορεύειν
καὶ νῦν οὐ πλεῖν χρὴ ἔσται σοι ἀστροπόλοιο.

⁸⁷⁸ This plot point is reminiscent of the copied memory disk they'd made for Tsar in book 16; saving this memory and returning to it later also typifies the theme of **nostalgia** in the *Astronautilia*.

⁸⁷⁹ = καταβρύκω.

But I shall tell you another thing, and you should keep it in your mind: if someone cuts straight across the length of our lord Moebius' strip, then there would not be another two rings, but a single ring that's twice as long as the previous one, but if you should then cut this ring again, then there would be two rings which are separated apart from each other.⁸⁸⁰ If you can do this with the ring of time, then you would save the cosmos from Mandys by making a doppelgänger, and now Mandys would only be destroying the time and space of just one of them, and the other one would remain as visible as before. To accomplish these things would require time-scissors, and I keep this machine in my stomach. I scoffed it down when there was a danger that some intelligent creature would be able to steal it. But now I want to give this machine to you, alien. But I shall tell you another thing, and you should keep it in your mind: you will not be able to stimulate my brain much longer, since it is dead and will quickly rot when it's warm. When I soon begin babbling something that's nonsensical, then that'll be the sign that my brain is rotten, and I won't be able to tell you wise prophecies for long, but soon you will no longer require an astrologer.

⁸⁸⁰ Once a moebius strip has been cut in half along its length twice, you end up with two interlocked moebius strips (like links in a chain).

Καί γέ με νῦν θάψον μὲν ἐνὶ κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν
 ἐκ νηός με βάλων· ἀλλὰ πρὶν τοῦτο ποιεῖσθαι
 σῶμα δέ μοι τιῆσαι χρονοσχιστῆρά τε εἴλειν.
 Χαῖρ' ὧ ἀνθώπισκε καλὴν νυ τύχην γλίχομαί σοι
 γύγλα ὕγυγλα ὕγυγλα ὕγυγλα ὕγυγλα ὕγυγλα.» (215)

Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ Γρογαλὸς καὶ τῆς ῥήμης ἐνόησα
 ὥς νῦν μιν σῆψις ἔλε ἐγκέφαλόν τε νόον τε.
 Τονδ' Ἐλέφας θεράπων κάτα δ' ἔτμεσε⁸⁸¹ εἴλε τὸ μῆχος
 δεινὸν τῷ χροῦνός ῥα διάνδιχα σχίζεται αὐτὸς
 οὐ μέγα περ μικρὸν τεχνάων θαῦμα ιδέσθαι. (220)

Ἀλλὰ γε τὸν βάλομεν κόσμουδε κενοῦδε βάθοσδε.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥόβοτον κυβερνητῆρα ἄνωγα
 ἰθύνειν πλοῖον ὥς περ Γρογαλὸς κατέλεξεν.
 Πόρρω νῦν πλέομεν πρὸς πλάνην χρονοφυλάκτων
 γνῶμην ξεινοτάτην κόσμου καὶ μήλου ἔχοντες. (225)

⁸⁸¹ = tmesis of κατατέμνω.

And now bury me in the depths of the cosmos by throwing me from the ship, but before you do this, cut up my body and take the time-scissors! Farewell, o homunculus, I long for you to now have excellent luck, gygla ygyggla ygyglaygygla ygygla ygygla.”

So the Grogal spoke, and we recognised from his words that rot had now taken his brain and intellect. The doctor Elephas cut him into pieces and took the clever machine by time itself can be cut into two parts, it wasn't big, but a small piece of technology, and a wonder to behold. Then we threw him into the depths of the empty cosmos. But then I ordered the robotic pilot to direct our vessel just as the Grogal has described. Now we sailed onwards towards the planet of the time-guardians, who are in possession of the strangest knowledge of both the cosmos and of the sheep.

Book Y

*[Τὰ περὶ ἄλλων ληστῶν κοσμικῶν καὶ ξείνων πλανήτων·
μάλιστα περὶ τῶν ὑπνοτικῶν θηρῶν]*

Ὡς πόρρῳ πλέομεν πρὸς πλάνην χρουνοφυλάκτων.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θέμενος λάβραξι⁸⁸² πορεῦταις
[νῆα κυβερνήτης ῥόβοτος διὰ χάσμα ἴθυνεν]
 πάντα τὰ μοι Γρογαλὸς εἶπεν καὶ τοῖσιν ἔειπον.
 Ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐπευφήμησαν ἐταῖροι (5)
 Μανδὺν ζητεῖσθαι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 καὶ τε χρόνου γε φυλακτῆρων πρὸς τμῆμα πορεύειν
 πολλά τε λίσσεσθαι αὐτῶν ὑψηλὰ κάρηνα
 εἴτε δὲ κιχρῆσαι χρουνοπλεκτῆρα ἄριστον
 ἢ αὐτοὺς Μανδὺν κρατέσαι ἢ δηθὰ διώκειν (10)
 ἢ δ' αὐτοῖς ἀέκουσι σοφὸν κλέψαι τόγε μῆχαρ
 καὶ ἡμᾶς ζητεῖν λάβειν Μανδὺν πολυπίκρον
 οὐδὲ τέ τις χρόνος ἦν τοι ἄφεσθαι ἢ μαλακίζειν
 ἀλλὰ μὲν ἐργάζειν εἰνεργεῖη τε βίηφι
 ὥς δέ τε κίνδυνος κρατερὸς κόσμῳ ἐπείκειται (15)
 οὔτις γὰρ θανέειν ἔθελει εἰ μὴ ἀνόος τις,
 καὶ νῦν τῶν πάντων ζωὴ γε ταλάντεσιν ἔσκεν.

⁸⁸² cf. *Astr.* 14.333.

Book 20

[The events concerning the other space pirates and alien planets, but mostly concerning the hypnotic animals]

So we sailed onwards to the planet of the time-guardians. But holding a meeting for us experienced travellers [while the robotic pilot directed the ship through the chasm of space], I told them all the things that the Grogal had told me. Then the rest of my companions all shouted in agreement to seek Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe and to journey towards the station of the time-guardians in order to entreat their lofty heads often whether they'll lend you an excellent time-weaver, or defeat Mandys themselves, or even chase him, or steal that clever machine from them if they're unwilling to listen, so we can seek and capture the very bitter Mandys ourselves, since there is no time at all to let it go or be soft, but to get to work energetically and vigorously; and so fierce danger presses upon the cosmos, for no one wants to die (unless he's some sort of fool),⁸⁸³ and now the life of all things is in the balance.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸³ This comment would seem to go against what the Grogal prophet had been saying about death and his quotations of Theognis.

⁸⁸⁴ Reminiscent of Zeus' scales, cf. *Iliad* 8.69, 16.658, 19.223, **22.209** (Hector and Achilles).

Ἄλλ' ἔτι τοῖσι λέγοντος ἐμοῦ εἰν ραδιοφώνῳ
 ὃψ ἦλθεν μεγάλη ξεινογλώσση τε βαρεία
 καὶ εἰν τῇ ὀθόνη⁸⁸⁵ αἰσθητήρων τοι ἔφηνε (20)
 ξεινή νηὺς μεγάλη τοῖς φεισροβόλοις ἀραρυῖα
 ἀλλὰ γε τῆς φωνῆς ῥήμην Φράντης μετέθηκεν·
 «Σχέσθε θέειν ζεῖνοι· ληϊστήρες δέ τοι ἔσμεν
 ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὰ ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες.
 Εἴ κεν νῦν φεύγειν σχήσεσθ' ἀπο δώμεθα ἡμῖν (25)
 οὐκ ὑμᾶς κτενέωμεν· ὁμήρους θήσομεν ὑμᾶς
 ἡμῖν δουλεύειν οὐ τηλοῦ πιπρασκέσθαι.
 Ἀλλ' εἰ μὴ σχήσεσθε θοοῦ πλοίοιο πόρευσιν
 φεισροβόλοις μακροῖς κτενέωμεν νηλεῖ θυμῷ.»
 Ὡς φάτο ληστήρων φωνή.⁸⁸⁶ χόλος εἶλεν ἐμὸν κῆρ (30)
 αὐτίκα τὸν ῥόβοτον στρῶσαι προπέτασμα ἄνωγα
 ἠλεκτρομαγνητικόν – τό γε καὶ καλέουσι
 ἄνδρες ἀρχαιοὶ ἐμπήλυγα.⁸⁸⁷ καὶ ἔλομέν μιν
 νηῦφιν ληστήρων ὅτε τοὺς ὄλεσαν ξένα ζῶα –
 ῥίμφα δὲ φευγέμεναι ἐκ φεισροβόλων καταλήψει. (35)
 Ἀλλ' αὐτίς ἦλθεν φωνὴ ἐκ ραδιοφώνου·
 «Νήπιοι ἐστε φίλοι ὡς στρώσατε ἀντιπέτασμα
 ἠλεκτρομαγνητικὸν τέχνημα παλαιόν.⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁵ With the meaning of the modern Greek οθόνη, '(computer/ *cinema*) screen, monitor': the **televised gaze**.

⁸⁸⁶ The disembodied voice of pirates (*plural* genitive, not singular).

⁸⁸⁷ Most likely from ἐπήλυξ, cf. *Astr.* 17.113, 161, 179, 18.163, 164; cf. Euripides *Cyclops* 680, taken from the scene in which Polyphemus has been blinded by Οὗτις (Odysseus, 'no man'), and asks the chorus where he has gone, and they say that Odysseus and his crew have used a rock 'as a screen'.

⁸⁸⁸ The opposite of a novelty marker, this technology is *out-dated*.

But whilst I was still speaking to them, a voice came through my radiophone, mighty, in an alien language, and deep, and a large alien ship furnished with phaser cannons appeared on a screen through the sensors. Then Franta translated the subject of his voice:

“Aliens, stop running! We are pirates, staking our souls by bringing misfortune to strangers. If you should now refrain from fleeing and surrender to us, then we shall not kill you, but make you our captives and slaves, to be sold off not far away. But if you don’t halt the course of your swift vessel, then with a pitiless mind we will kill you with our long phaser cannons.”

So the voice of the pirates spoke, and bitter anger seized my heart. I immediately ordered the robot to spread the electromagnetic curtain – which ancient men also call a ‘screen’, and we had taken it from some pirates’ ship when alien creatures destroyed them – to quickly flee from the phaser cannons’ grasp. But the voice came again from the radiophone:

“You’re fools, my friends, since you’ve spread an electromagnetic curtain, an old-fashioned technology!

Ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν αἰσθητῆρας ὃχ' ἀρίστους
 οἳ μὲν ῥηϊδίως τι περαίνουσιν προπέτασμα (40)
 οὔδε τι ῥηδιοφώνησιν βλάψαι ἔχεται ἱς.
 Ἀλλ' ἄγε σχέσθε θέειν ἢ ὕμμι σάος γὰρ ὄλεθρος.»
 Ὡς φάτο ἡ φωνὴ καὶ ἐγὼ ῥοβότῳ ἐπίτελλον
 ἵνα πυρηνιακὴν αὐξῆσαι ὅτι μάλιστα
 λησθηρὰς φύγεμεν· ὅγε πείθετο ἀνδροῖδης φῶς. (45)
 Σμερδαλέῃ μεγάλῃ ἔλασεν ἱς νῆα μέλαιναν
 πυρηνιακὴ· ταχέως πτάτο εἰς μέγα χάσμα
 καὶ γε φέρεν τηλοῦ ἡμᾶς ἀπονόσφι ὁδοῖο
 τῇ θέλομεν μὲν πλεῖν τὸ φυλακτῆρων ποτὶ τμήμα
 ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς ἔφορεν κρατερὴ ἀτόμων μεγάλη ἱς (50)
 ἄγνωτον κόσμονδε ὅπου οὐκ οἶδαμεν οὔτι.
 Οὕτως μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου ἅπο μὲν νενοήμενοι⁸⁸⁹ αὐτοὶ
 χώρῃ ἀγνώτῃ· βάλε μὲν γε πυρηνιακὴ ἱς.
 Τῆς νηὸς σπουδὴν κωλύσαι αὖ μεμαόντες (55)
 πυραύλους γε πάλιν βάλλειν ἐποιήσαμεν ἄνδρες
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο πειράουσιν
 παύσασθαι πλοῖον· μεγάλη μάλα ὤθετο ὀρμή.

⁸⁸⁹ = tmesis of ἀπονοέομαι.

But we on the other hand have the best sensors by far,⁸⁹⁰ they can pierce your sort of curtain easily, and you don't have the strength to cause us any harm with your radiophones. So come, stop running, or else your destruction will be certain!"

So the voice spoke and I ordered the robot to increase the nuclear power as much as possible in order to escape the pirates, and the android obeyed. The terribly great nuclear force propelled our black ship: it flew quickly through the great chasms of space and carried us far away from the path which we wanted to sail on towards the guardians' station, but the strong, mighty atomic force carried us to an unknown part of the cosmos, where we had no knowledge at all. And so we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos, glad to have escaped death, but we were also lost in an unknown tract where the nuclear force had shot us. And in an attempt to hinder the speed of our ship, we men made the rockets shoot backwards, but even so, no solution revealed itself to us at all at we tried to stop our vessel, since the momentum seemed too strong.

⁸⁹⁰ Old vs. New.

Ἀλλὰ βάδην τε βάδην μεγάλη φθινέσκετο ὁρμή
 πυραύλων ὑπο βαλλομένων· νόστησε δέ τ' ἀρχή (60)
 ἰθύνειν πλοῖον διὰ χάσματ' ἀβενθέα κόσμου
 ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς Φράντης ὅπασεν πολλῆς χάρτησιν
 οὐρανήσιν κομπουτρῶν καὶ σχήμασιν ἄστρον
 τούτου μὲν χώρης κόσμου ἀπονόσφι ἐούσης
 κλέψας τοῖς ρόβοτοις τοῖς μνήμην πρῶτα δέδωκεν (65)
 εἰν ροβότων πλάνη τὸν «*Ἀνάστασις*» οὕνομα θήκαν
 καὶ μοι αὖτις ἔνεγκε πάλιν παραιτίησιν.
 Ταύτας μὲν χάρτας δὲ τεθήκαμεν τῇ ἐνὶ μνήμῃ
 ἄρχοντος ροβότων κομπουτῆρος ἐνὶ νηϊ.
Καίσαρα τὸν τὸ πρὶν τε *Μέλιν* τοι ὕστερον αὖτε (70)
 ἄνδρες ἀστεροναυτῆρες κλῆσιν καλέουμεν.
 Τῶν δε βοηθείη γε βάδην ὁδὸν ἠϋρομεν αὖτις
 ἀλλὰ τε καὶ χαλεπὴ καὶ δουλιχὴ ἔσκε πόρευσις
 ὥς μάλα τηλοῦ ἀμᾶς ἦκεν ἀτόμων μεγάλη ἱς
 πουλοὺς πλανήτας ξείνους ἐπισκεψάμεθ' ἄνδρες (75)
 καὶ γὰρ χρήματα πολλὰ γ' ἐλεύσσομεν ἀστρονέοντες
 θαύματα· οὐ περ ἐγὼ τά κεν ἐξερέειν δυνάσαιμι.

But gradually the mighty momentum dwindled little by little since the rockets were being shot the other way, and the power to direct the vessel through the bottomless caverns of the universe returned, but then Franta equipped us with many heavenly maps produced by computers, as well as the configuration of the stars, and of this tract of the cosmos which is far away; he'd stolen it from the robots whom he'd first given his memory to on the robots' planet that they'd given the name 'Uprisal', and brought it to me again as an apology. We put these charts in the memory of the computer that was chief amongst the robots on our ship. We astronauts had previously called him 'Tsar', then later on we called him 'Melis'. With their help, we gradually found our path again, but it was a difficult and long journey, since the mighty atomic power had thrown us very far; we looked upon many alien planets, and saw many marvellous things as we swam amongst the stars, but I wouldn't be able to tell you about them.

Πλανήτην γε μέγαν τοι ἐλεύσομεν ἀστρονέοντες
 τὸν μάλα περ μεγάλης ἀγροῦ ἵνος βαρύτητος
 ὥς τῷ οὐ ζήειν φύσεες νόμιμαι ἐδύναντο (80)
 ἀλλὰ γε τῷ ζώνῃ μεγάλη στρέφετ' ἄμφι παχεῖα
 καὶ ἐν τῇ ἦσαν θῆρες φρόνιμοι ὄρεοι τε
 οἱ μὲν τῇ μή οἱ δῆτ' ἐτέρῃ ἐπιπουλῇ
 ἀλλήλοισιν μαρνάμενοι· ἦν θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι.
 Καὶ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἄλλον ἐπισκεψάμεν ἀστέρα ξεῖνον (85)
 δίπλακα· πλανῆται περὶ τὸν στοφεύντο πολλῆς
 καμπῇσιν ξείνησι τὸ χάρματα ἀστρονόμοισιν.
 Πλανήτην Τλαλόχων καὶ ἀφικόμεθ' ἀστρονέοντες
 ὥστε πεπαυσάμεναί τε μέλαν τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ ἀφῦσσαι
 τοῦ γε δέον τοί ἐστι πλοίοισιν ἀστροπορευῶντων (90)
 ἀνδράσι πινέμεναι βρώμην δέτε συντιθέσθαι
 πλάνην λεύσσοντες αἰσθετήρεσσιν ἔοντα
 βιοφόρον πλοῖον περ ἐρύσσαμεν ἡπείρονδε.
 Ἐνθα δέ τοι Τλάλοχοι μὲν ἔναιον θηρία αἰσχυρὰ
 ἀνδράσι πυγμαίοισιν ἐοικότα ἀλλὰ δὲ τοῖσιν (95)
 μούνη ἦν κεφαλὴ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς γε φύοντο
 κῶλά τε ἦδε πόδες· κεφαλούποδες⁸⁹¹ ἦσαν ἅπαντες
 τοῖσιν μὲν κεφαλὰς πυκινὴ κεκαλύψατο λάχνη
 λευκὴ· ὄμματα τῶν σφαίρησιν ἐοικότα ἦεν

⁸⁹¹ Cephalopod = lit. 'head-foot'.

We saw a giant planet as we swam amongst the stars whose gravitational field was so mighty that normal creatures couldn't survive on it, but a large thick belt orbited around it, and on it there were intelligent, hilly animals, with some on one surface and some on the other surface, fighting with one another: it was a wonder to behold. And then we saw another alien binary star system, and around it orbited many planets with strange curves: a delight to astronomers. Then we arrived at the planet of the Tlalochs after sailing amongst the stars so we could rest and draw the black water that vessels need to journey amongst the stars, that men need to drink and to synthesise food. Seeing with our sensors that this planet could support life, we moored our vessel on solid ground. The Tlalochs resided there, shameful beasts that resembled pygmies, but they only had a head, and from it grew hands and feet-like limbs: they were all cephalopods, and their heads were densely covered in white fur, and their eyes resembled balls.

- στόμμα δ' ἔχον μακρὸν καὶ ἔνδον χαυλιόδοντας (100)
μακροὺς καὶ στερεοὺς ἥως χθονὶ κάρποι ἔχουσιν.
Τοὶ τὰ πρῶτα φίλοι μὲν εἴσάατ' ἡμεροὶ εἶναι
ἀλλὰ δέ τ' ἐξαπίνης ἦρξαν ἔριδα προφέρεσθαι
χωρὶς αἰτίης τὴν μὲν φωτῶν φρένες εἶδην
σμερδαλέη ἰαχῇ σκίρτωσαν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα (105)
ἦδεν' ἄνω τε κάτω· πανδαιμόνιον κατάκλησεν
καὶ μὲν ἀναῖσσαντες ἀμᾶς κνώδεσσιν ἄπειλον.
Παύρους κτείναντες ἄμμων φεῖσροισι ὀλοοῖσιν
τοὺς ἄλλους φυγέμεν ἐποιάσαμεν αἰνὰ βόωντας
ἀλλὰ γ' ἀφύσσαντες τὸ ὕδωρ αὐλοῖσι μακροῖσιν (110)
νῆα μὲν εἰσβαίνοντες ἐπεὶ πλέομεν διὰ χάσμα.
Δὴν μὴν τοὶ πλέομεν μέχρις πλοίῳ φθίτο λύμφη
καὶ αὗτις δέον ἦν πλανήτην βιοφόρονδε
νῆά τ' ἐρύσσασθαι τε μέλαν τὸ ὕδωρ ἀναφῦσαι.
Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ σκαφεῖ ἐτάρους ἐρίηρας ἔπεμψα (115)
αὐτοὶ γὰρ μένεμεν πλάνου τροχιῇ στρεφόμενοι
ἀλλὰ δέ τῃ σκαφεῖ γ' ἄνδρες πλάνην ἐπίβησαν
τόνδε θεωρῆναι τε ὕδωρ κελανὸν μὲν ἀφῦσαι.
Ἀλλὰ δ' ἔπειτά γε δὴν ἦσαν πλάνη κάτω ἄνδρες.
Τοῦνεκα αἰσθητῆρας ἐγὼ πλάνηνδε ὄρεξα (120)
καὶ τηλεσκοπέων⁸⁹² ἐσθλοὺς ζήτησον ἐταίρους.

⁸⁹² The televised gaze, plus the ships' sensors being imagined as an extension of the pilot's own.

They had wide mouths and inside them they had long and hard tusks like the ones that boars on Earth possess. At first, they seemed to be friendly and tame, but then they suddenly began putting their rivalry on display for no reason that men's minds can understand, with a terrible shout they leapt here and there, up and down. They called down a pandemonium, and leaping up they intercepted us with their teeth. Then killing a few with our deadly phasers, we drove the rest to flight, though they shouted terribly, but then once we'd drawn the water with our long tubes, we boarded our ship and then sailed into the abyss of space. We sailed for a while, until the water in our vessel ran out, and again we needed a planet that could support life, and to moor our ship to draw the black water. But then I sent my trusty companions in our skiff, and we stayed behind orbiting in a circle around the planet, and then the men in the skiff walked along the planet to inspect it and draw the dark water. But then my men had been down on the planet for a long time. Which is why I pointed my sensors towards the planet and looked from a distance in search of my fine companions.

Τοὺς εἶλον πλάνη τε καθημένους ἐνὶ ποίῃ
 μωρά γε μειδῶντας ἕως τινὰς ἀνδριάντας⁸⁹³
 ὄμμασιν ὥστε κενοῖσι βλέποντας ἢ τε νεκροὺς
 ἄμφι δὲ τοῖς ἦσαν θῆρες ξεῖνοι ἄτοποι τε (125)
 εἰν γῇ πουλυπόδεσσι θαλάσσης οἰκότες ἦσαν
 κωφῶς καὶ ἀσαφῶς ὡς ξεῖνα τὰ θηρία ἦσαν.

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ἐτέρην ἐρύσαι σκαφὶν ἄνδρας ἄνωγα
[τὴνδε νέην Τόνδης ῥόβοτος καὶ βοῦρδα τέτευχαν
– ἣ περ μικρότερη τῆς κλεφθείσης ἀπὸ Κύπτου (130)
ἦν ὡς οὐχὶ πολὺς γ' εἰν νηϊ ἔσκε σίδηρος]

καὶ ἐτάρω κρίνας δύο πάντων ἕξοχ' ἀρίστω
 σὺν τοῖν καὶ Φράντη ῥοβότῳ σκαφὶν αὐτὸς ἔβησα
 ἀλλὰ γε τὸν πέμπτον Ἴβω ῥόβοτόν τοι ἄνωγα.

Ἔσσυμένοι ζαπέδῳ ἔχομεν σκαφὶν ἀστροπορεύτην (135)
 αὐτίκα τῆς σκαφέος μὲν ἕκαστος ἄλτο χαμαῖζε
 καὶ ποτὶ τοὺς ἐτάρους κάτα δ' ἐζόμενους νυν ἔη μὲν
 φείσρους χερσὶν ἔχοντες ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἦνδανε θυμῷ.

Ἐξαπίνης τοί μοι ξεῖνη ἱς ὅσσε κάλυπεν⁸⁹⁴
 ἡ ἐ νόον· οὐ πλεῖν μὲν ἦν ξείνῳ ἐνὶ πλάνῃ (140)
 ἀλλὰ τοι εἰν μεγάρῳ γε δόμου μάλα σιγαλοένος
 ἐνθά δὲ πάμπολλαι ἦσαν κοῦραι μάλα ἐσθλαὶ
 εἵμασι παύροισι ἐσθλοῖσιν τοί γ' ἀραρυῖαι
 ἢ ὀρθῶς γυμναί· τόδε μοι γήθησε φίλον κῆρ.

⁸⁹³ Usually translated as 'statues', but the Czech translates it as 'loutka' ('*marionette*'), like one used in a puppet show made of wood.

⁸⁹⁴ cf. *Iliad* 5.310, 5.659, 11.250, 11.356, 13.580, 14.439, 16.503, 22.466

I found them sitting in a grassy place on the planet, smiling stupidly like some sort of marionettes, gazing with empty eyes precisely like they were corpses, and around them were alien and unusual animals that resembled the octopodes that live in the Earth's Sea, to put it bluntly and less distinctly, since these animals were alien. But then I ordered my men to moor another skiff [the new one that the robot Tonda and Burda had manufactured – it was much smaller than the one stolen by Kypa, since there was not much iron on our ship], and having chosen two companions, by far the best two amongst them all, I boarded the skiff myself along with them both as well as the robot Franta, and then I ordered the robot Ivo to join as a fifth. Descending, we kept the space-faring skiff on the ground, and we each immediately leapt to the ground from the skiff, and approached our companions that were currently sat down, carrying phasers in our hands, since the situation wasn't pleasing to our minds. Suddenly, a strange force enveloped my eyes and my mind, and I was no longer on an alien planet, but in the great hall of quite a resplendent palace; there were numerous girls here that were very beautiful, who wore only a few fine clothes, or were straight up naked: my dear heart rejoiced at this.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹⁵ This episode is sounding somewhat reminiscent of the lotus-eater episode of the *Odyssey* at the start of book 9.

Αὐτίκα δ' αὖ μ' ἐσθλοῖς καὶ μελίκχοις ἐπέεσσιν (145)
 κοῦραι προσηύδαν δῶκαν βρώμην τε ποτῆτα
 ἐσθλὰς ἡδείας καὶ ἥρξαν ἔργα ἐρώτων.
 Ταῦτα δέ τοι οὐ πῶς γέ θέλω ἔπεσιν καταλέξει
 ὥς καὶ αἰδέομαι· μάλα ἡδὺς καιρὸς ἔεσκεν.
 Ἐξαπίνης μὲν ἔγειρα μετ' ἐν νηὶ μελαίνῃ (150)
 ἄμφι δέ μοι ἦσαν πάντες ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
 πάντες καὶ ῥόβοτοι καὶ Φράντης πάντα ἔνισπεν.
 Ἦμός γ' εἰν πλάνην περ ἐβήσαμεν ἄνδρες ἀγαυοὶ
 τῆμός τ' ὥς ἐταροὶ γε τὸ πρὶν κάτ' ἄρ' ἐζόμεθ' ἀγρῶ
 ἦως ἀνδρεῖαντες ἐγὼ ἐτέρω γε δύω τε. (155)
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ τὸ ῥοβότῳ Φράντης τε μάλιστα τε Ἴβῳ
 τῷδ' ἀσκηθὲ ἔτην καὶ θαυμάζοντε ἀνέστησαν.
 Φράντη καὶ τι ὄναρ βραχέως περ ὅσσε κάλυπεν
 ἀλλὰ ῥόβως φρόνιμος σκέδασεν οὐλὸν τὸν ὄνειρον
 ~ ὥστε βιοπλαστής ἐστιν θηρέσσιν ἐοικὼς (160)
 ἀλλὰ δ' Ἴβῳ ῥόβοτος μένεν ἀσκηθῆς ἀταραχθεὶς ~
 ἀλλὰ ὁ Φράντα ἔπειτα ἐῷ βιοραδιοφώνῳ
 ἀγγελίην πέμψεν πάντων εἰς νῆα μέλαιναν.

The girls immediately addressed me in words that were excellent and soothing, they gave me food and drink, good and pleasant, and began erotic deeds. But I do not wish to describe these things to you in a speech, since I am also ashamed: it was a very pleasant time. I then suddenly woke up in my black ship, and all my trusty companions were around me, as well as all the robots, and Franta told me everything: that when we glorious men stepped onto the planet, then we sat down in a field just as my companions had done previously, as if me and my two companions were marionettes. But my two robots, Franta and most of all Ivo, they were both unaffected and stood up in amazement. Some kind of dream also enveloped Franta's eyes briefly, but since he was a sensible robot, he scattered the destructive dream ~ since being made of living flesh made him similar to animals, but the robot Ivo remained unaffected and undisturbed ~ and then Franta sent a message from his biological-radiophone to our black ship about everything.

Αὐτίκα τις ῥοβότῳ Ἴβῳ ἀνὴρ ἐπίτελλεν
 ῥαδιοφώνησας θήρας κτάμεναι περὶ ἡμῶν (165)
 καὶ μὲν ἠνέγκαι πάντας φῶτας σκαφέονδε
 καὶ δέ τ' ἀπόπτασθαι συντάξαι νηὶ μελαίνῃ.
 Ταῦτα⁸⁹⁶ δ' Ἴβω ῥόβοτος ῥέξεν στερεῆς πραπίδεςσιν
 καὶ ὥς μὲν ἐσάωσε βροτοὺς ἄνδρας ἐνὶ πλάνῃ.
 Ἀλλὰ γε κομπουτῆρος ἐνὶ μνήμῃ ἐγὼ εἶλον (170)
 πάντα περὶ πλάνου που ἤλθομεν ἄνδρες ἀγανοὶ
 καὶ περὶ τῶν θηρῶν τοὶ πουλυπόδεςσιν ἔοικαν.
 Τοῦτοι μὲν ἀπατᾶν ἄλλους θήράς τοι εἴωθαν
 ἡδονικὰς ὄψεις ὀτρυνομένοι ἐνὶ θυμῷ⁸⁹⁷
 ὥς οὐ πλεῖν βρώμην τιν' ἔλιν ἰδὲ οὔδε ποτῆτα (175)
 τῆμος τεθνάμεναι· νεκροὺς τότε καὶ κετέδοντο.
 Οὔδε τε τοῦ πλάνου κελανὸν μὲν ἀφύσσαμεθ' ὕδωρ
 ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν πόρρῳ πλέομεν δι' ἀβενθέα κόσμου
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου ζητοῦντες τμήμα φυλάκτων.

⁸⁹⁶ Křesadlo has written τοῦτα.

⁸⁹⁷ Křesadlo has written θυμῷ.

Some man immediately ordered the robot Ivo on the radio to kill the animals around us, and bring us all to the skiff, and prepare it to fly back to our black ship. The robot Ivo did these things with a resolute mind, and so he saved us mortal men on that planet. And then in the computer's memory I came upon everything that concerned the planet which we glorious men had gone to, and that concerned the animals who resembled octopodes. They were accustomed to deceiving other kinds of animals with hedonistic visions, even when their minds were wide awake, so that they wouldn't take any more food or even drink until they had died, at which point they'd then devour their corpses.⁸⁹⁸ We didn't draw this planet's dark water, but were now sailing onwards through the depths of the cosmos, glad to have escaped death whilst seeking the guardians' station.

⁸⁹⁸ This sounds somewhat like what the triffids do in John Wyndham's 1951 sci-fi novel *Day of the Triffids*, in which humanity is blinded by a meteor shower, and carnivorous ambulating plants eat people's corpses when they get into accidents (as well as killing them directly with their stingers).

Ἀλλὰ δὲ τοῦ μύθου θηρῶν οὐκ αὖ τέλος ἐστί. (180)
 Ὡς νῦν τῇδε σκαφεῖ ἓνα θηρῶν εἵλομεν αὐτίς
 μικρὸν μὲν τε νέον ὥς εἵσατο εἰσορόωσιν
 καὶ ἡμῖν τὸ πέλωρ εἰν κώματι εἵσατο εἶναι
 τὸν μὲν πρῶτα θέλον κτάμεναι φείσῃ πολυπίκρῳ
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι ἐτέρη φρονέοντί τοι ἦνδανε βουλή (185)
 καὶ δέ τε μὴν θήκη νηὸς γε τέθηκα πέλωρον
 οἰκίσμῳ Φάραδαι τὸ μὲν εἵσατο ἵνα ἐρύκειν
 ὑπνοτικὴν· φανερῶς τὸ πέλωρ φορβὴν ἔχε σάρκα
 καὶ οἱ συνθετικὴν ἄδην ἐς κλουβὶν ἔθηκα.
 Πυκνὸς μοί γε λόγος γέγαα φρεσὶ τοῦ περὶ θηρὸς (190)
 ὥς καὶ σοι πόρρῳ, ἀνάγνωτα,⁸⁹⁹ λόγοισιν ἐνίσπω.
 Ἀλλὰ γε νῦν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο,
 τοῦδε χρόνου γε φυλακτῆρων πρὸς τιμῆμα δόμον τε.

⁸⁹⁹ ἀναγινώσκω is a technical word for reading (out loud), cf. note on *Astr.* 7.40.

But this was not yet the end of these animals' story, since we had now taken one of the animals onto our skiff, a small one, young, or so it seemed to us as we looked at it, and the monster seemed to us to be in a deep slumber. At first I wanted to kill it with my highly piercing phaser, but another plan pleased me as I considered it, and I placed the monster in the ship's hold, in a Faraday cage that seemed to hinder its hypnotic power. The monster obviously had flesh in its diet, so I placed enough synthesised food in its cage. A cunning hypothesis occurred in my mind about this animal, that I shall tell you, my reader, about in a speech later on. But for now we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos towards the station and palace of the time-guardians.

Book Φ

[Τὰ περὶ τῶν χρονοφυλάκτων. Φράντου δεξιότης καὶ ἀριστεία.]

- Ἐνθεν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 τμῆμα χρονοφυλακτῆρων ζητοῦντες ἀγαινῶν
 καὶ μετὰ παμπόλλας ὥρας σύστημα ἔφαινε
 πλανήτων· εἷς ἡέλιος πολέες πλανῆται
 τούτων μὲν ἴδμεν ἓνα ἕξοχον εἶναι ἀπάντων (5)
 ὅς γε τέταρτος ἔην ἀπὸ ἡελίου στροφέεσθαι
 τοῦ πέρι μοι Γρογαλὸς εἶπεν μάντις κρυόπηκτος
 ὥς περὶ τὸν μῆνη στρέφεται πλάνην ζακενοῖο
 τῇδε περὶ μῆνην τὸ τμῆμα χρονοφυλάκτων
 θᾶσσον μὲν πλέομεν πλάνου καὶ τοῦ πέρι μήνης (10)
 πολλὰ δέ μοι κραδίη στήθει ἄσπαιρε ἴδοντι.
 Καὶ τῇ εἰν μῆνη ἴδομεν τεχνήματα πολλὰ
 ἡὲ παρασκευάς· τέχνησι βρύησε σελήνη
 αἰσθητήρεσι πᾶσι πολέσσι τε φεισροβόλοισιν
 αὐτοματοῖς· δεινὸν μὲν ἔην ἀραρυῖα σελήνη· (15)

Book 21

[The events concerning the time-guardians. Franta's mental dexterity and finest hour]

From there we sailed through the depths of the empty cosmos in search of the station of the noble time-guardians, and a system of planets appeared after a very long time: a single sun and numerous planets. We saw that one stood out amongst them all, it was the fourth to orbit from its sun, about which the Grogal prophet who'd been frozen in ice had told me that a moon orbited around a planet in the vacuum of space, and around that moon was the station of the time-guardians. We sailed in haste nearer the planet and its moon, and my heart throbbed hard in my chest when I saw it. And we saw much machinery and equipment on the moon, this moon was swelling with devices, all kinds of sensors and all kinds of self-firing phaser cannons: this moon was skilfully equipped.

Ἐνθα δέ μοι ὀρόωντι κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 γινώσκοντι ὅπως χαλεπὸν εἶη διαπερσαι
 ἢ ὀρθῶς ἀδυναστὸν ἐπεὶ πολὰ ὄπλα ἔχοντο
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς ἐθέλησα ποιῆσαι ὅσσα γ' ἄριστα,
 καὶ σκαφὶν εἰσβαίνειν ἐτάροις ἐσθλοῖς ἐπίτελλον (20)
 καὶ Τόλμην μένεμεν τροχίῃ πλάνου στροφέουσιν
 καὶ τὴν τὸν ῥοβοτόν γε κυβερνήτην ἰθύνειν.
 Καὶ σκαφὶν αὖτ' ἐπίβησα ἐγὼ πίσυρές τε ἐταῖροι
 οὐ μοῦνοι· σὺν ἄμμιν ἔβη Φράντης μεταθήτωρ.
 τὸν Ἴβω ῥόβοτον μὲν ἐάσαμεν αὖθ' ἐνὶ νηὶ (25)
 ὄφρα φυλακτῆρας ἄνδρας μὴ ἀνταγωνίζειν
 εἶδοντας ῥόβοτον πολεσὶν φεῖστοις ἀραρόντα.
 Ἀλλὰ δέ τ' εἰν κύστη φέρομεν ζῶον ἀπὸ πλάνου
 τοῦ πυμάτου ξείνου τόδ' εἶλον ἐγὼν ἐνὶ νηὶ
 ἡδυπαραισθεσεωνγενετὲς ζῶον ἀπατάον.⁹⁰⁰ (30)
 Τὴν κύστην Βούρδης τεῦξεν πυκινῆς πραπίδεςσιν
 ὥς μὲν χωρίζειν γε παραισθεσεωνγενέτ' ἵνα
 τοῦ θηρός· κλουβὶς Φάραδαι οὐ τοι ὑπόχρησεν
 οὐδὲ τέ τοι δύναμαι ἀρχὴν εἶπειν παρασκευῆς
 ἡ ἐ λόγον· χαλεπὸν νομίμῳ βροτῷ ἀνδρὶ λάβεσθαι (35)
 ἄλλην καὶ Βούρδης πυκινὴν τεῦξεν παρασκευὴν
 ὥς δέ τε τὴν ὀλοὴν ὀρθῶσαι ἵνα πέλωρος
 εἰς ὃν μὲν γε θέλοι ἄλλους δ' ἐάσαι τοι ἀσκηθεῖς
 ταύτην τοι κύστην φέρομεν σκαφεῖ ἡ ἐπέλωρον.

⁹⁰⁰ A very rare *versus tricolos*; the first word is a bahuvrihi compound formed from ἡδύς + παραισθησις + γεννητής (lit. 'the producer of sweet misperception/delusion').

My dear heart shattered when I saw, since I realised that it would be difficult to penetrate, or outright impossible, since they have much weaponry. But even so, I wanted to do as best as I could do and ordered my fine companions to board the skiff and to keep the Tolma orbiting in a circle around the planet, and for the robotic pilot to steer it. And again four companions and I boarded the skiff, not alone, since the translator Franta came along with us. I kept the robot Ivo on the ship, so as to not antagonise the guardians by them seeing that the robot was furnished with numerous phasers. But then I carried in a cage the creature from the previous alien planet, I took it onto the ship, a deceptive creature that produces sweet delusions. Burda had built the case with his cunning mind to diminish the power of the animal that produces delusions. Burda had built the case with his cunning mind to diminish the power of the delusion-producing animal, a Faraday cage was not useful for this, nor am I able to tell you the origin or theory for the piece of equipment. It's difficult for normal mortal men to grasp, but Burda constructed another cunning piece of equipment to direct the destructive force of the monster towards whoever he wanted, and others would be unaffected, so we carried the cage and the monster in the skiff.

Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ἐγγὺς τοῦ τούτων τμήματος ἦκεν (40)
 ῥίμφα μάλα πτάμενοι πρὸς μῆνην σῶμά τε πλαστὸν
 ὥς ἄνδρες καινοὶ γε «σατελλίτην» καλέουσιν
 ἀστεροναυτῆρας μὲν ἐλεύσομεν οἱ ποτάοντο
 εἰν ζακενῶ ἀνέτοι φεῖσφους χεῖρεσσιν ἔχοντες
 μικροὺς καὶ μεγάλους· σκαφοάνδρασιν εἵμενοι ἦσαν (45)
 τοὺς μὲν καὶ «σπεῖς σοῦτ» ἄνδρες βρύθανες καλέουσιν.
 Κύστας ὅμοισιν μὲν ἔχον σὺν βιοφορήσει
 καὶ σὺν πυραύλῳ ἐλάσαι δι' ἀπείρονα κόσμον.
 Οὗτοι μὲν φανερώς φρουροὶ φυλάκεσσιν ἔεσκον
 τμήμα φυλάσσοντες πλὴν ἄλλων αὐτοματῶν τε. (50)
 Τοῖσιν εἰς λάβραξ⁹⁰¹ κόσμου ἦρξεν ἀγορητὴν
 γελῶσση ξεινοτάτῃ· τὴν μὲν Φράντης μετέθηκεν.
 «Ὡς ξεῖνοί τινές ἐστε; πόθεν γλαφυρὸν πλέτε κόσμον;
 ἦ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἦ μασιδίως ἀλάασθε
 οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ἐπ' ἀστέρας ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα (55)
 ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες;
 Ἀλλὰ γ' ἐκεῖ μὲν τμήμα φυλακτῆρων χρόνου ἐστὶ
 καὶ γὰρ ἀπορρήτον τε ἀνεγρίθεσσι⁹⁰² οὐσίης
 ἀλλ' ἄγε ἡμετέρεην γε πάλιν νῦν τρέψατε βᾶριν
 μὴ βεβληεκάτας φεῖσροις ὑμᾶς ἀπόλεσθαι.» (60)

⁹⁰¹ cf. *Astr.* 14.333, the most likely translation is 'experienced', Křesadlo translates it as 'vlk' ('wolf') which can also be used to mean an 'experienced, courageous person'.

⁹⁰² Obscure, but the Czech translates it as 'unauthorised'.

But when we'd come near to their station, flying very quickly towards their moon and an artificial body that novel men call a 'satellite'.⁹⁰³ Then we gazed upon astronauts who were flying about in the vacuum of space, relaxed, and carrying both small and large phasers in their hands. They were clothed in scaphanders, which British men call a 'space suit'. They had boxes on their shoulders which contained their life-support, and also a rocket, so they could propel themselves through the boundless cosmos. These were clearly the guardians' garrison, keeping watch over the station, in addition to other automata. One of them, with experience of the cosmos, began talking in a very alien language, which Franta translated:

"O aliens, who are you? Where in the hollow cosmos have you sailed from? Are you wandering in pursuit of some goal or just in vain? Are you wandering through the stars here and there in pursuit of some goal or just recklessly like pirates, staking your souls by bringing misfortune to strangers? But this is the station of the time guardians, and it is forbidden to unauthorised beings, so go, turn your boat back now, lest we destroy you by being shot at with our phasers."

⁹⁰³ N.b., Křesadlo translates this as 'Sputnik' in the Czech translation.

- Ὡς φάτο τῶν φυλάκων πρέσβυς φοβεροῖς ἐπέεσσιν
 ἀλλά γ' ἐγὼ κύστην σὺν θηρὶ ξεῖν' ἀπὸ νηὸς
 ἔμβalon εἰν κόντῳ γλαφυρῷ τῷ οἱ ῥέεν ἀήρ
 πνεῖν ἰδὲ θερμαίνειν καὶ τὴν ποτὶ φῶτας ὄρεζα
 εἰν τῇ τοι δ' ἔσκεν παρασκευὴ κύματα λυγρὰ (65)
 ἡδυπαρισθέσεως ἐκπέμπειν θαῦμα ἰδεσθαι.
 Ἐξαπίνης φρουροὶ ἔπεσον εἰς κῶμα ἕκαστος
 καὶ νῦν εἰν ζακενῶ ποτέοντο ἕως ἰδὲ νεκροὶ
 τὰς ἐλεφαιρομένας⁹⁰⁴ ὅψεις τεθηπότες ἄνδρες
 ταύτων τερπόμενοί τε λελασμένοι ἀστροσυνάων⁹⁰⁵ (70)
 ἀλλὰ γε οὐ τελεὸν Βούρδης σύστημα τέτευχεν
 ὥς τοι ἱς ἀπάτης γε πάλιν ῥέε εἰς σκαφὶν αὐτήν.
 Ἐξαπίνης δέ με εἶλεν ὄναρ περ ἐγρηγορόντα
 καὶ αὖτις κούρας εἶδον παῦροις ἀραρυῖας
 εἵμασιν ἢ γυμνάς τὸ τέθηπα τε χαῖρε φίλον κῆρ. (75)
 Ἐξαπίνης μὲν ἔγειρα ἐνὶ εἰργμῷ πολυπικρῷ
 κακῶδει δνοφέρῳ πυκνιοῖς μοχλοῖς ἀραρόντι
 ἐκ στερεοῦ χαλύβου· μάλ' ἀεικέλιος τόπος ἦεν.
 Σὺν μὲν ἐμοὶ τῷδ' ἦσαν ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
 οἱ πίσυρες ἰδὲ καὶ ῥόβοτος Φράντης βιόπλαστος (80)
 ἔξω δ' ἔστηκαν φρουροὶ φεῖσροις ἀραρόντες
 φῶτε δύνω· ξεῖνω ἥτην ἀτόπω τε μάλιστα.

⁹⁰⁴ cf. *Odyssey* 19.565, describing the gate of Ivory which false and deceptive dreams pass through.

⁹⁰⁵ Abstract noun formed from ἀστήρ, 'stariness, the qualities of a star'.

So the ambassador of the guardians spoke with fearful words, but I cast the box that contained the alien animal from the ship on a hollow pole, which air flowed in so it could breathe and stay warm, and I pointed it at the men. In it was the piece of equipment that would emit baneful waves of sweet delusions (a wonder to behold). Suddenly each member of the garrison fell into a deep slumber, and now flew in the vacuum of space like they were corpses, these men were amazed by the false visions, enjoying them and forgetting the qualities of stars, but Burda had constructed an imperfect system, since the deceit's power flowed backwards into the skiff itself. A dream suddenly seized me even though I was awake, and again I saw girls wearing few clothes or were naked, I marvelled at this and my dear heart rejoiced. I suddenly woke up in a very bitter dungeon, foul-smelling, gloomy, and furnished with densely packed bars made of hard steel: it was a very unsightly place. Two of my trusty companions were with me, there were four of us including the robot Franta who was moulded from living flesh, and standing outside were two guards equipped with phasers, they were both strange and very unusual.

Ἐν τοῖν ἦν ξεινόν τι πέλωρ πυκινόν τε καὶ εὐρὺ
 ἀλλὰ δὲ οἱ κεφαλὴ γε λεοντεῖη ἐϋκυῖα
 ὅδ' ἕτερος μικρός περ ἔην ράμφω κόρακες ὥς (85)
 χρώματι ἦν κελανὸς τῷ οἱ μὲν ὅσσε ἐρυθρῷ.
 Πάντες μὲν ἦσαν οὕτως ἐνὶ τμήματι φῶτες
 κνώδαλα ἡὲ πέλωρα γελωία τ' αἰσχροῖα ὀρᾶσθαι
 τοῦτοι μὲν φανερώς τηλοῦθεν ἀθρόοι ἦσαν
 τῆσδε γαλαξίης πάσης· ξεῖνα μάλα δ' ἦσαν. (90)
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν Φράντης εἶπεν τόδε συγκύρσαιτο.⁹⁰⁶
 Πάντες τοὶ φρουροὶ ἐκ κώματι μὲν κεκρεμάσθην⁹⁰⁷
 πάντες καὶ ἡμεῖς σκάφεϊ ἐλεφαιρόμενοί τε
 μοῦνος Φράντα ῥόβως ἐγρηγόρει εἰν σκαφὶ νηὸς
 ὥστε βιόπλαστος οὐκ ἡδονικὸν σχέτο κέντρον (95)
 ἀλλὰ τὰ πρῶτ' αὐτός τι ποιήσεν κέντρον ἑαυτῷ
 καὶ τὸ συνισμένον⁹⁰⁸ ἦν καὶ ἀσθενὲς καὶ γέ ἐ λῦσεν
 ἥματι τῷ ὅτε μιν λυγρὴ παγὶς εἶλεν ὁδουσιν.
 Οὕτως ἀσκηθὴς Φράντης μένε τῶν ἀπατάων
 Ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μυρομένῳ περ (100)
 ὥς ὅτι οἱ φύλακες αὐτοὶ καὶ ἔχον προπέτασμα
 ἡλεκτρομαγνητικῶν οἰδμήτων τῶν περὶ τμήμα
 ὥς καὶ οὐ Φράντης καλέσαι τὴν νῆα τύχησε.

⁹⁰⁶ = συγκυρέω.

⁹⁰⁷ = κρεμάννυμι.

⁹⁰⁸ cf. note on *Astr.* 1.190, most likely translation is 'stunted'.

One of the two was some sort of strange monster, stocky and broad, but had a head that resembled a lion's, and the other one was small with a crow-like beak, it was black in colour and its eyes were red. All the men were like this in the station, beasts and monsters, ridiculous and repulsive to look at. They had obviously gathered together from far away, from all over the galaxy, since they were so alien. But now Franta told us what had happened: all the guardians were suspended in a deep slumber, and we all were being deceived. Only the robot Franta was awake in the ship's skiff, precisely because a bioplastic being doesn't have a pleasure centre. But he had made some sort of centre for himself earlier on, and it was stunted and weak, so he removed it on the day when the baneful trap caught him with its teeth.⁹⁰⁹ And so Franta remained unaffected by everything, but even so, no solution revealed itself to him at all whilst he wept, since these very guardians also possessed a curtain of electromagnetic waves around their station, and so Franta didn't manage to call our ship.

⁹⁰⁹ cf. *Astr.* 16.330, 352, Franta's self-castration.

- Ἄλλ' ἄλλοι ἦλθον φρουροὶ πτάμενοι ποτὶ πλοῖον
καὶ ὥς μὲν γ' εἶδον τετυχόντα τὰ ἔργα φύλακτες (105)
φείσοισιν ὄλεσαν τὸν ὑπνοφόρον ἰδὲ θῆρα
καὶ αὐτῶν ἐτάρους καὶ ἡμᾶς τμήμα δὲ εἶλον
τούς τοι ἱητῆρι δίδουν ἐρίηρας ἐταίρους
ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς βάλλον πάντας λυγρῷ ἐνὶ εἰργμῷ.
Ταῦτά γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων κατέλεξε καὶ ἡμῖν. (110)
Αὐτίκα πρὸς κλουβὶν ἦλθεν κόραμος ἐπὶ πάντων
ξεῖνον καὶ ἄτυπον τὸ τέρας μάλα θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι.
Σώματι δ' ἀνθρώπῳ νομίμῳ μὲν ἔεσκεν εἰκῶς
ἀλλὰ γέ τοι αὐχὴν πέρ μήκης αἰσchrὰ τέτυκτο
ὥς δολιχὸς ὥς τοῦ φωτὸς πᾶν σῶμά περ ἔσκεν (115)
λεπτός· εἶν δὲ ἐῷ μικρὴν κεφαλὴν ἔχεν αἰσchrὴν
ὥπι γε χωλοποδεῖ⁹¹⁰ τῷ θηρί περ ἔσκ' ἐϋκυῖα
καὶ ναὶ οἱ χεῖρεςσι μόνως δύο δακτύλῳ ἦτην.
Ὅς δέ τε εἰς εἰργμὸν κεφαλὴν θῆκεν διὰ μοχλῶν
ἅμμε δὲ εἰσορόων μικροῖς οἷς ὄμμασι τρύψεν. (120)
~ τῷδε φύλακτε δῦω ὁ λέων ἰδὲ ῥαμφοφόρος τε
φείσους εἰς ἡμᾶς ὀρέγοντες τ' ἐγγὺς ἄνεσταν ~
ἀλλ' ὅγε σκεψάμενος ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδα
ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε τὸ ῥῆμα·

⁹¹⁰ i.e., the two-toed sloth, a *Choloepus/Bradypus didactylus*.

But other guards came flying towards our vessel, and when the guardians saw our constructions, they destroyed the animal that induces sleep with their phasers, and took their companions and us into their station, but then threw us all in a baneful dungeon. Our translator Franta described these things to us in detail. The leader amongst them all immediately came to the prison, he was alien, unusual, and very monstrous (a wonder to behold). His body resembled an ordinary human's, but his neck was shamefully long, it was as long as the man's entire body, and slender; and he had a shamefully small head that resembled the face of that lame-footed creature, and, yes, its hands only had two fingers. He put his head inside the prison through the bars and pierced us with his small eyes as he gazed at us. ~ the two guards, the lion and the beak-bearer, aimed their phasers at us, standing nearby ~ but this man addressed us in winged words whilst he examined us, and then our translator Franta translated his speech:

«Ὡς ξεῖνοί τινές ἐστε; (125)

πόθεν γλαφυρὸν πλέτε κόσμον;

Ἦ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἢ μαψιδίως ἀλάσθε
οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ἐπ' ἀστέρας ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες;

~ Ἀλλὰ γε ληϊστῆρας ἐγὼν ὕμμι εἶναι ὁῖω
ὥς καὶ νῦν ἐθέλεσθε χρονοπλεκτῆρα ὑφαίρειν (130)

θαῦμα τὸ τεχνάων πωλῆσαι μυριάδεσσιν
ἢ αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι φύγεμεν προτ' ἐόντα χρόνονδε
καὶ οὕτως νέμεσίν τε τίσιν δίκης ὑπαλῦξαι.»

Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ κόραμος καὶ ἐγὼν οἱ μύθῳ ἀμείβην.
«Οὐδ' ἔτι τοι ὄναξ ληϊσταὶ ἄνδρες ἐσμεν (135)

ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ φύλακες ἐκ τηλοδαποῦ πλανήτου
τὸν μὲν ἡμετέρη γλώσση Γαίην καλέουμεν.»

Καὶ οἱ ταῦτά γε πάντα περὶ μήλου κατέλεξα
Μανδύος καὶ ἄλλων τὰ τύχην εἰν κοσμοπορεύσει
ἀλλὰ γε Φράντα μεταφρήζων μετέθηκε ἅπαντα. (140)

Ὡς ἐφάμην ὃ μ' αὖτις ἀμείβετο νηλεῖ θυμῷ·
«Νήπιος ἔσσις ὧς ξεῖνε ὅπως ὁῖεις πραπίδεσσιν
ἡμᾶς πιστεῦσαι τὰ ἅδ' εἶπας ψευδολογίζων.

Οὐδε φυλακτῆρες εἰς ὃν τίδε κοσμοθεωρῶν
πιστέομεν χρόνοι ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιοί ἐσμεν. (145)

“O aliens, who are you? Where in the hollow cosmos have you sailed from? Are you wandering in pursuit of some goal or just in vain? Are you wandering through the stars here and there in pursuit of some goal or just recklessly like pirates, staking your souls by bringing misfortune to strangers? But I think that you are pirates, since you currently wish to steal a time-weaver, a wonder of technology, in order to sell it for a countless figure, or to use it yourselves to flee into a past time, and thus escape retribution, punishment, and judgement!”

So the leader spoke, and I replied to him in this speech:

“No, my lord, we are not pirates, but are ourselves guardians from a distant planet, which we call ‘Earth’ in our tongue.”

And I described to him all the things that concerned the sheep, Mandys, and the rest that had happened on our journey through the cosmos, and then our translator Franta translated everything. So I spoke, and he replied to me with a pitiless mind:

“You’re a fool, o alien, since you suppose in your heart that we would believe what you have told us in a deceptive speech. We, the time-guardians, don’t put our faith in the being that watches the universe, since we aren’t idiots.

- Ἀλλὰ γε μῦθος δ' ἐστὶ μαθηματικῶν πότε ἀνδρῶν
οἱ ἡμῖν ἔθελον τὸ σέβας θεμέναι ἐνὶ θυμῷ
τῶνδε σοφιάων καὶ τεχνάων περιπυκνῶν.
Ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐμέν γ' ἀφελεῖς ἀπλόοι ἰδὲ φῶτες
χρουνοφυλακτῆρες· τόδε γρηῶν ἐστὶ νόημα (150)
ὥς πέρ τι πρόβατον κόσμον κατέχοι μάλα μικρὸν
εὐρὺν ἀπείρονα μὲν τοι ἀβενθέα – οὐ θέμις ἐστί.
Οὐδὲ τε πίστιν ἔχω μέτα μὲν θέσεως ἀπὸ θηρὸς
ὥς μὲν θηρίον ἐστὶ κακὸν βροτοῖ ἀνδρες ἄμες δέ.
Ἀλλ' οὐ καὶ φρονέω πίστως μὲν μοι μετάθεσθαι (155)
ἀλλὰ ἐ συμπλῆξαι καὶ στρέψαι πάντα ὁῖω⁹¹¹
ὥς λογικόν γε δόκει καὶ σὺ ἀποφώλιος ἔσσι.
Ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ὑμᾶς σχήσω φυλακῇ ἐνὶ πικρῇ
τῆμος καὶ ἰδιόν γε ἔχομεν μεταθήτορα γλώσσων
πρὸς τὸν μὲν πέμπω ἀλλῶν φυλάκων ποτὶ τμῆμα (160)
τηλαδαπόν· τό γαρ εἴλε χρόνον μέγα χάσμα περεῖσαι.
Ἀλλὰ γε νῦν αἰρήσω ἐγὼ μεταθήτορα γλώσσων
ἐξετάσαι χωρὶς εἴ κεν μὲν ἀληθής εἴη.
Ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰρήσω ἐτάρους καὶ νῆα μέλαιναν
οἱ δε περὶ πλάνην ὑμᾶς στροφέουσι μένοντες (165)
οὐδ' ἔτι τις σπουδὴ ὥς ὑμᾶς οἱ μένον ἀνδρες.»*

⁹¹¹ The time-guardians are questioning Franta's ability to translate accurately; this is the first time in the epic so far that someone has accused Franta of misrepresenting or otherwise failing to convey what is being said. The question of how accurate Franta has been translating has been something I've touched on before (cf. note on *Astr.* 12.8).

But it's rather just a fiction of mathematicians who want to instil religious awe in people's minds towards science and their cunning technologies. But we time-guardians are plain and simple men. This is an old wives' tale, that some sort of very little sheep keeps the cosmos in its mind, broad, boundless, and bottomless – it's not right. I don't even have faith in the translation from your animal, since it is a wretched little creature and we are mortal men! But I don't think that he is trustworthy enough to translate on my behalf, but rather I think that he tangles and twists everything, because it seems the logical answer, and that you are idiots. But come now, I shall keep you under bitter guard until I have my own translator of languages, and I shall send him to the far off station of the rest of the guards, since it takes time to journey across the mighty abyss of space. But now I shall take your translator of languages to prove whether he's really being truthful by scrutinising him separately. But I shall also take your companions and your black ship, which has been staying in orbit around our planet, but there is not the trouble for that yet since there are men waiting for you."

Ὡς φάτ' ἀνὴρ κοραμός με κατεκλάσθη τε φίλον κῆρ
καὶ γε λέοντα ἄνωγε θύρας εὐργμοῦ ἀνακληῖσαι
καὶ τὸν σκούγκα ἔλων ἔλιπεν δ' ἡμᾶς τε καὶ εἰργμόν.
Ἡμεῖς μὲν χαίτας τίλομεν κροῦμεν δέ τε κρᾶτα (170)

πάντες κλαίοντες καὶ ἀμηχανίῃ ἔχε θυμόν.
Εἰς τέλος καὶ ἄθεοί γε ἐπεύχεσθαι μεμάαμεν
εἴ κέν τις ζῶν θεὸς εἰν κόσμιοιο βάθεςσιν
ἀλλ' οὐκ ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο εὐχομένοισιν.
Οὕτως μὲν κλαίνοντες ἐμείναμεν ὅσσα τυχῆσει. (175)

Ἐξαπίνης μὲν ἔγωγε πάλιν ἦν νηὶ μελαίνῃ
πάντες καὶ πίσυρες ἔταροι οἱ ἦσαν ὄμηροι
καὶ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ ἰδὲ ἦν καὶ Φράντα ῥοβώτης.
Ἡμῖν θαυμάζουσιν ἔπος δολιχὸν κετέλξε
ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὶν στόματος (180)

μικρὴν κατά δ' ἔκπτυσσε πύξην
καὶ δέ ἐ δοῦς μὲν ἐμοὶ ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδα·
*«Χαῖρε πλοίαρχε πάτερ τῇ τοι ξείνῃ παρασκευῇ
χρουνοπλεκτῆρος τὸν ἐγὼν ἐν τμήματι κλέψα.
Οὗτος ἀνὴρ κόραμος οὐπὲρ θέλε ἐζητάζειν
ἀλλὰ μιν εἶλεν ἔρως πάντων δαμάτωρ ἐνὶ κόσμῳ (185)
καὶ ὃ γέ μοι ἐθέλησεν ἀναζ φιλότῃ μιγῆναι.*

So the leader spoke, and my dear heart shattered, then he ordered the lion to unlock the gates of the prison and to leave us and the prison once he's taken the skunk. We ripped out our hair and beat our heads, all of us crying, and helplessness held our minds. In the end, we atheists tried to pray, if by chance there is some god alive in the depths of the universe, but no solution would reveal itself to us as at all as we prayed. And so we awaited whatever was going to happen as we wept. Then suddenly I was back on our black ship, as well as all four of my companions that were captives, and our translator Franta was also on our vessel. Then he described to us the long story whilst we were astonished, but first he spat a small box out from his mouth and handed it over to me and addressed us in winged words:

“Rejoice, ship's captain, father, in this alien equipment, a time-weaver, that I stole in the station! That leader did not want to question me at all, but rather Eros seized him, subduer of all things in the cosmos,⁹¹² and this lord wanted to mingle with me in love.

⁹¹² Eros and sexual desire is a running theme of the *Astronautilia*; Eros is often seen as a conqueror or subduer.

Ἀλλά με νῦν στήσεν τραπέζης μεγάλης ἐπὶ κρατὸς
 καὶ δέ τέ μοι χήλας ἤρξεν γλώσση⁹¹³ λείχεσθαι
 τοῦτο δὲ τῷ κοράμῳ λαγνείην σφοδρὰν ἔδωκε
 ὥς ὁ μέγα στενάχων γε λυγίζετο ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 ἀλλ' ὥς ἐκστάσει ὁ λυγίζετο ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 τῷ ἐγὼ εἰν τραπέζῃ πύξην στρεπτῆρος ἐλεύσσον
 καὶ ἀναγιγνώσκων ἄνα τὴν ὥς γράμματα ἦσαν
 αἶψ' ἔγγων αὐτὸν καὶ ὥς μιν ἐργάζεσθαι. (190)
 Αὐτίκα εἰς στόμα μιν εἶλον πληκτῆρα χρόνιοι (195)
 καὶ μὲν ἐμῇ γλώσση⁹¹⁴ πίεσον περόνην ἐπὶ ταῦτον
 ἐν ἡμῶν ὀπίσω ἦλθιν· τότε καὶ νῦ τέτυκτο
 ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν γε ταχῶς πλάνην καὶ τμήμα λίποιμεν
 ὥς ἔχομεν ῥα τὸ μὲν θέλομεν ἰδὲ ζωοὶ ἐεσμεν.»

⁹¹³ N.b., the presence of his tongue is ironic, since *glossa* also means 'language', and this chief guard was obsessed with the fact that he believed Franta wasn't translating languages properly.

⁹¹⁴ Again, there's definitely symbolism here to the fact that Franta is using his *tongue* to press this button on the time-weaver and go back in time: **language is an instrument of nostalgia**, which makes more sense when we remember that Křesadlo's choice of penname was a sign of him being proudly Czech despite his exile, since the letter ř strictly a feature of the Czech language.

But now he placed me on top of a large table, and began licking my paws with his tongue, and this gave the leader a severe amount of sexual pleasure, since he writhed this way and that way whilst groaning immensely.⁹¹⁵ But then he writhed this way and that way in erotic ecstasy, at which point I spied the weaving box on the table, and when I read what was written on it, I knew what it was at once and how it worked. I immediately put the time-weaver inside my mouth and pressed a button on it with my tongue to go backwards a single day, and so that moment has become the present moment. But come now, let us leave this planet and station behind quickly, since we have what we wanted and are still alive!”

⁹¹⁵ According to Křesadlo’s theory of sexual orientation (cf. Pinkava 1986), this leader would be classed as a homosexual male zoophile partialist.

Ὡς φάτο Φράντα μεταφρήζων ἔταροι δέ τε πάντες (200)
 ἄνδρες καὶ ῥόβοτοι χερσὶν κροτέοντες ἐπαίνουν
 καὶ πλοίαρχος ἐγώ. Μεγάλως Φράντης ἐποίησεν.
 Καὶ δ' ἐχθές γ' ἔχομεν πάλιν ὄντες καὶ σκαφὶν αὐτὴν
 καὶ νηὸς θήκη ἦν καὶ ὁ ὄνειροποιήτης
 ὥς δέ τε μιν φύλακες κτάνον (205)

αὔριον οὐ χθές ἔως νῦν
 ἀλλὰ γε πλεκτῆρ σὺν Φράντῃ ἦλθεν πάλιν αὐτὸς
 ὥς ὃ γέ μιν στομίῳ εἶχεν εἰν σώματι ἔνδον.
 Ἐνθεν γηθόσυνοι πλέομεν κόσμου διὰ χάσμα
 ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτου χροῦνοπλεκτῆρα ἔχοντες
 καὶ τὸν νῦν μὲν ἔχοντες ἐγὼ ἰδὲ καὶ ἔταροί τε (210)
 Μανδὺν ζητέμεναι καὶ μῆλον ἦλθομεν ἄνδρες.

So our translator Franta spoke, and all my companions and robots praised him by clapping their hands, as did I, the ship's captain. Franta had done it excellently. And since we were back in yesterday, we also had our very skiff and the dream-maker was also in the ship's hold, since the guardians killed him tomorrow, not right now yesterday morning, but the weaver itself had also come back along with Franta, since he had it inside his body in his mouth. From there we joyfully sailed through the caverns of the universe, glad to have escaped death by being in possession of the time-weaver, and now that my companions and I had it, we went in search of Mandys and the sheep.

Book X

[*Τοῦ Μανδύος κίχησις καὶ δόλος*]

Πόρρω γὰρ πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 μαψιδίως Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ ἔο μῆλον
 αὐτὰρ χρήματα πολλά γ' ἐλεύσσομεν ἀστρονέοντες
 θαύματα· οὐ κεν ἐγὼ τάδε ἐξερέειν δυνάσαιμι.
 Ἀλλὰ γε θῆρ ξεῖνος ζῆεν ἀπατῶρ⁹¹⁶ ἐνὶ νηϊ (5)
 ὥς δέ τε μιν φύλακες κτάνον αὖριον οὐ χιτιοί περ
 ἀρχὴ τῆσδε ὁδοῦ ἦεν τὴν νῦν ἐπόμεσθα
 οὕτως ἐσσόμενον δύναται δίχα μειρίζεσθαι.⁹¹⁷
 Ἀλλὰ γε θῆρα ἔχειν οὐ μοι νῦν ἥνδανε θυμῷ
 ὥστε τρέφειν δέον ἔσκε (10)
(οὐ γὰρ ῥα θέλον ἐ χιμαίνειν⁹¹⁸)
 καὶ πέμπεν ἀπάτας μὲν ἐμοὶ τὸ πέλωρ καὶ ἐταίροις.
 Ἀσθενέες χαλεπὸν τοῦτον προπέτασμα τέτυκτο.
 Ἀλλὰ γε πειραῖσθαί περ ἄνωγέ με θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ
 εἴ κε χρόνον θήσω πρόσθαι εἰς αὖριον ἡμαρ
 ὅτι τυχήσῃ θηρί τε καὶ πᾶσιν ἐτάροισιν. (15)

⁹¹⁶ Agent noun formed from ἀπάτη, = ἀπατητής.

⁹¹⁷ = μερίζω.

⁹¹⁸ Obscure, possibly from χειμαίνω, 'drive by a storm', impersonally it means 'when it's winter', and an extension of this second meaning could be referring to the fact that no crops grow in winter; the Czech translates it as 'starve'.

Book 22

[Mandys' arrest and cunning]

So we sailed onwards through the depths of the empty cosmos seeking Mandys and his sheep on a random course, and we saw many marvellous things as we swam amongst the stars, but I wouldn't be able to tell you about them. But the alien and deceptive animal survived on our ship, since the guards killed it tomorrow, not yesterday, which was the start of the journey that we are now following, so that the future might be split in two. But now it did not please my mind to keep the animal, since it had to be fed (I didn't wish to starve it), and this monster sent me deceptive visions, as well as my companions, since the curtain was weak and coarsely made. But my courageous heart urged me to test what would happen to the animal and all my companions if I were to move time back to tomorrow morning again.

Οὐδ' ἔτι κίνδυνος μέγας εἶσατο ἄμμι κρέμασθαι
 ὥς χρονονοπλεκτῆρα ἔχον χερσὶν στιβαρῆσιν·
 εἴ κέν τοι δεινὸν συνκύρσῃ ἐσσομένῳ τι
 ἄψ ἄλσθαι⁹¹⁹ δυνάσσαιμι πάλιν χθιζέονδε χρόνονδε.
 Ἀλλά τε καὶ περόνην πίεσον πειραζόμενός τε. (20)
 Αὐτίκα θῆρ τοι ἄφαντος ἔφυ καὶ οὐ πλέον ἔσκε
 ἀλλὰ μὲν ἄγνωται ἵνες χρόνου ἢ φύσεός τε
 νῆα θοὴν πέμψαν δι' ἀπείρονα χάσματα κόσμου
 εἰς τούτου ἀπόκομμα τὸ οὐ πλεῖν λάβρακες⁹²⁰ ἴσμεν.
 Τῷ μὲν νῦν πλέομεν πλάνην ἱκανὸν ζητοῦντες (25)
 ὧδ' ἀναπαυσέμεναι καὶ ἀποψύχεσθαι ἔοικεν.
 καὶ αἰσθητῆρες πλάνην εἶλον ἐνὶ κόσμῳ
 τῷ μὲν ὥς γαίῃ ἀῆρ ἦν καὶ κλίμα πρόφρον.
 Ἔσκε μὲν ἀστροῖδης μικρὸς· τότε ἱς βαρύτητος
 ἔσκεν ὥς γαίῃ μάλα γὰρ πυκινῆς ἀπὸ ὕλης (30)
 ταύτῃ μὲν χρυσὸς χλωρὸς κούφους δύνατ' εἶναι
 ἀλλὰ γε οὐκ ἴσμεν· κόπρος δέ τε πάντα κάλυπεν.
 καὶ τῷ ἐκ κόπρῳ θαλερὴ βοτάνη ἐφύτευσεν
 ἀλλὰ μὲν οὐλομένη ὁδμὴ τῷ ἦν ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
 ὥς ἀνὴρ Γρογαλὸς μαντεύσατο φῶς κρυόπηκτος⁹²¹ (35)

⁹¹⁹ = ἄλλομαι, '*jump, leap*'; time-travel being a leap, jump, or skip is a common feature of sci-fi.

⁹²⁰ cf. *Astr.* 14.333.

⁹²¹ cf. *Astr.* 19.78-79.

And great danger didn't seem to still be hanging over us, since I held the time-weaver in my sturdy hands: if something terrible should happen in the future, then I can jump back again to this time, yesterday. And then I pressed the button, testing it out. The animal immediately disappeared and was no more, but the unknown forces of time and nature sent our swift ship through the boundless chasms of the universe towards a fragment of it that we experienced men had no more knowledge of. Which we now sailed through in search of a suitable planet where it was reasonable for us to stop and recuperate ourselves. And then our sensors detected a planet in the cosmos that had an atmosphere like Earth's and a gracious climate. There was a small asteroid, and its gravitational force was very much like Earth's, since it was comprised of dense matter, there could be light-yellow gold in it, but we didn't know, since it was entirely covered in dung. And a lush pasture grew from the dung, but the odour on this planet was accursed, just as the Grogal man that had been frozen in ice had prophesied.

- πᾶς ὁ μὲν ἀστροΐδης ἦεν ὡς γαῖα μέλαινα
 μούνως ἤματα καὶ νύκτες ταχέως μεταβάλλον⁹²²
 καὶ μὲν ὀρίζοντος καμπὴ κυφώτερος ἦεν
 τοῦνεκα τηλοῦθεν μακρότερος εἶσατ' ἕκαστος
 καὶ ἥως οἶων ἀνέδου θηρῶν μέγα πῶυ (40)
 μακρότεραι ἔϊσαν οἷες καὶ ἡϋτε ἵπποι.
 Ἦμῖν εἰσορόωσί γε πάλλεν φαίδιομον ἦτορ
 πλάνην γιγνώσκουσι περ αἰ τοῦ μάντις ἔνισπεν
 εἰσάντων Μανδὺν καὶ μῆλον ἐγγὺς ἐόντας. (45)
 Ἀλλὰ γε τὰς οἷας ξεῖνος ποιμὴν ἐφύλαξεν
 σώματι δ' ἀνθρώπῳ ἀναλίγκιος ὡς νομίμῳ περ
 ἀλλὰ δέ οἱ κεφαλὴ γε κυνὰς ἦν θαῦμα ἶδεσθαι.
 Ἐξαῦτίς μιν ἐγὼ προσέφην πτερόεσσιν ἔπεσσιν
 ἀλλὰ ὅδ' ἀγνώτῃ γλώσση μοι ἀμείβετο μύθῳ
 αὐτίκα Φράντα μεταφρήζων εἶλεν ιδίωμα (50)
 καὶ νῦν ἠρξάμενος καλῶς μετέθηκε ἅπαντα.
 Τὸν μὲν ἐγὼν ἐρότησα πόθεν γ' ἦλθεν ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
 αὐτοῦ καὶ γενέην ἰδὲ καὶ κλυτὰς αὖθι τοκῆας.
 Ἀλλ' ὃ γ' ἀμειβόμενος πλαστὸν λέγεν εἶναι ἑαυτόν
 οὐ φυσικὸν· τέχνην πυκνὴν μούνως ἀραρόντα. (55)

⁹²² Μεταβάλλω is a technical term for translation.

The entire asteroid was dark like Earth, only the days and night shifted quickly, and the curve of the horizon was more convex, which is why each of us seemed larger from a distance, and when a mighty flock of sheep emerged, the sheep also seemed larger, like horses. Our glorious hearts quivered when we saw them , since we recognised that the planet exceeded what the prophet had described, and we knew that Mandys and the sheep were close at hand. But an alien shepherd guarded the sheep, resembling an ordinary human in body, but his head was that of a dog's, a wonder to behold. I addressed him in winged words, but he replied with a speech in a language not known to me; my translator Franta immediately grasped his vernacular and now began translating everything beautifully. I asked him where he'd come to the planet from, as well as about his race and then about his glorious parents, and then he replied saying that he was artificially constructed, not naturally born, manufactured by cunning technology alone.

- «Ἔστι δέ τις κόσμῳ φρατρείῃ ἢ συνοδός τις
 πρὸς ἀνανήωσιν⁹²³ γ' ἀρχαίων μυθολογίων
 οἷδε γενηετική τοι μηχανικὴ κτίζουσιν
 δαίμονας ἀρχαίους πάντων ὁσίων ἐνὶ κόσμῳ
 ἢ τούτων εἰδῶλα· τὸ καὶ κτίσαν ἐμὲ αὐτὸν (60)
 ὡς Σλάβων ποιμῆνα θεὸν ὁ Βέλης ὄνομ' εἶχεν
 σῶμα μὲν ἀνθρώπου ἀλλ' οἱ κεφαλὴ κυνὸς ἦεν.
 Τοῦτον μὲν κτίσαν καὶ εἰς πλάνην με τέθηκαν
 μῆλα τε ποιμάζειν καὶ τοῖσι Βελητ' εἰκάζειν.⁹²⁴»
 Φῆ κυνόκρατος ἀνὴρ καὶ ἐμοὶ θαύμαζε φίλον κῆρ. (65)
 Ὡς οὐκ τῆς φύσεως θαυμάστερον ἄλλο τέτυκται.
 Ἀλλὰ δέ μιν αὖτις περὶ Μανδύος αἶψ' ἐρότησα
 τόν μοι ἀνὴρ Γρογαλὸς εἶπεν ἔμεναι ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
 ἀλλὰ βέλης δαίμων⁹²⁵ μοι ἀμείβετο πρόφρονι θυμῷ·
 «Ἦλθε δέ τις τοι ξεῖνε σκάφει ἀνὴρ ἐνὶ πλάνῃ (70)
 κυφὸς ἦν χολὸς δ' ἕτερον πόδα τῷ δέ τε κρᾶτον⁹²⁶
 λίσσον καὶ στροβιλώδες ἦν αὐτὰρ δέτε ῥῖνα
 πάμμεγαν αὐτὸς εἶχε ἕως σύκιον ῥοδοέντα
 τῷδε οἱ ὀφθαλμῶν σφαίρης μαυφῆσιν ἐϋκτη⁹²⁷
 εἶχε δὲ καὶ μῆλον σὺν εἶο οὐλοκάρηνον (75)
 καὶ ἔθελεν μένεμεν πολλῆς μετὰ τῆς ὄϊεσσιν
 σὺν τούτου μῆλου εἶλε σπέος τῷδ' ἔνι οἴκειν

⁹²³ = ἀνανεόομαι (ἀνανέωσις).

⁹²⁴ Very mimetic, this also feeds into the running theme of **nostalgia** that we have seen throughout the *Astronautilia*: the literal revival of ancient, old-fashioned gods as artificial beings, but not necessarily their worship. This pseudo-Veles has been manufactured in the image of the Czech god Veles, and has been instructed to mimic him in behaviour, i.e., by being a shepherd.

⁹²⁵ N.b., that the narrator *does* equate this Veles with the Czech god.

⁹²⁶ cf. note on *Astr.* 1.135.

⁹²⁷ = εὔκτη (υ/ι), dual 3rd person perfect of ἔουκα.

“There is some brotherhood or some society in the cosmos that’s dedicated to renewing the memory of ancient mythologies, and through genetic engineering they bring the ancient divinities of all religions in the cosmos or their likenesses into existence, and they brought me into existence too, just as the shepherd god of the Slavs who has the name Veles, and has the body of a human but the head of a dog.⁹²⁸ They made me him, and put me on this planet to shepherd the sheep and resemble Veles for them.”

So the dog-headed man spoke, and my dear heart was astounded, since there is nothing more wonderful than nature. But then I quickly asked him again about Mandys, whom the Grogal had told me was on this planet, and then the god Veles replied to me with a willing mind:

“Some man, alien, came in a skiff to this planet, he was hunchbacked, lame in one foot, and his head was bald and cone-shaped, moreover, this man had a very big nose that resembled a red fig, and his eyes resembled large balls. But he also had a woolly-domed sheep with him, and wanted to stay amongst the numerous sheep, then he chose a cave which he could live with this sheep in.

⁹²⁸ cf. appendix for an illustration of Veles by Mikoláš Aleš. The presence of a dog-headed humanoid being in what is essentially a travelogue evokes Ctesias’ inclusion of the *Cynocephali* in his *Indica*, and Lucian’s mockery of it in the *True History* (1.16)

ἀλλὰ γε τὴν μὲν ὄν αὐτοῦ θῆκεν παράκοιτιν
 ὥς γε πόδας οἱ ὀπισθίονας κρηπῆφιν ἔθηκεν⁹²⁹
 καὶ θυλάκους καταδὺς προβάτω πορνήσατο λίην (80)
 πολλάκι ταῦτα ποιοῦντα ἐγὼν ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
 ἀλλὰ δέ μοι βδελύρημα ἔλε φρένας εἰσορόωντι.
 Ἀλλὰ τοι ἐν πλάνῃ πολέες κριοὶ ἄρσενες εἰσιν
 καὶ τοὶ τῆνδε ὄν γ' ἔθελον θάμα μὲν ἐπιβῆναι
 καὶ ὄδ' ἀνὴρ φαῦλος τοῖσιν πόλεμον μεμάακει. (85)
 Πολλάκι τόνδε κριοὶ πλῆξαν κέρασιν στερεοῖσιν
 ἄρρώστον θῆκαν· οὐκ ἄλκιμος φῶς περ ἔεσκεν.
 Εἰς τέλος καὶ ὄδε φῶς εἶλεν πρόβατον ἐρατεινὸν
 νῆα δὲ εἰσβήσας πᾶτ' ἄνω ἐς ἀπείρονα κόσμον.
 Τοῦτο δέ τοι ἀνδρὸς καὶ μήλου ἦν ἀφικνοῦσις.» (90)
 Ἦ κυνόκρατος ἀνὴρ.⁹³⁰ μοι κακκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 ὥς μὲν ἔπετ' ἀπονόσφι ἔην Μανδὺς πολὺμητις
 καὶ τῆς ναυτιλίας⁹³¹ τέλος οὕτως ἔσκε ὀρᾶσθαι.
 Ἀλλὰ μὲν ἀστροῖδῃ μένεμεν βραχὺ καὶ διάκρισα
 κόσμου ἀποψύχειν χώρῃ στερεοῦ ζαπέδοιο (95)
 καὶ νομίμῃ βρώμῃ πλὴν συνθετικῆς γε πάσασθαι.⁹³²

⁹²⁹ cf. *Astr.* 10.131-132.

⁹³⁰ Having Mandys be disguised as a dog-person was pointed out to me by Václav Z. J. Pinkava (27/7/2025) to possibly be tying into the German phrase 'hundsgemein' ('dog-common, fiendish, nasty'). Křesadlo also often depicted himself as a human-faced dog, so by depicting Mandys as a dog-faced human seeks to show him as his antithesis.

⁹³¹ Notice that ναυτιλία is the last half of the compound title *astronautilia*.

⁹³² There's some meta-poetic resonances here to the preference for the 'real' food over 'synthetic' food, i.e., mimetic food.

But he took this sheep as his wife, since he placed her hind feet in his boots, and violently fornicated with the sheep after dropping his trousers, I've often seen him doing these things with my own eyes, but disgust seized my mind as I'd watch. But there are many male rams on the planet, and they often want to 'board' his sheep, and this worthless man would fight eagerly with them. The rams would often strike him with their sturdy horns, making him feeble, since he was not a strong man. In the end, this man took his beloved sheep and flew up into the boundless cosmos once he'd boarded his ship. This was the arrival of the man and the sheep."

So the dog-headed man spoke, and my dear hear shattered, since the tricky Mandys was far away again, and the end of our voyage wasn't in sight at all. But I decided to on the asteroid for a little while in order to take a rest from the vacuous cosmos on solid ground, and enjoy ordinary food rather than synthetic.

Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἀστροῖδης χαλεπὸς μαλότροφος ἔσκεν
 πολλαὶ ἤε καλαὶ φυταλαιαὶ τῷ γε φύτευον
 ἄνθεα παμπόλλων γε φύτων πολλὰ τε καὶ ἐσθλὰ
 οὐ σπύραδος ὁδμὴ μάλα τείρετο ὥς δέ τε τὸ πρὶν (100)
 ὥς μοι ῥῖς μὲν ἔφυν συνηθῆς εἰν ὀλίγῳ περ
 οὕτως τερπόμενοι φύσεως μένεμεν ἐνὶ πλάνῃ.
 Ἀλλὰ γέ μοι εἰν ἀστροῖδῃ οὐκ ἦνδανε θυμῷ
 ὄρθρων καὶ ὄρφνῶν τοι ἀμείβησίς γε ταχεία
 καὶ ὥς τῶν μὲν ἄνω ἄστρον στροφὰς ὥκα ταχὺς ἦν (105)
 οὐρανῷ εἰν κελανῷ κεφαλὴν ἱλιγξ ἔλεν αἰνὴ.
 Αἱ δ' ἄλλαι πᾶσαι οὐσίαι τῷ ἐνὶ πλάνῃ
 μῆλ' αὖτε καὶ ποιμὴν τούτων πάντων ἀμέλησαν
 ὅκτ' ὥρας χθονίας ἡὔδεν ποιμὴν ἐνὶ σπέσσι
 καὶ ἐκκαίδεκα τὰς λοιπὰς μὲν μῆλα νόμευεν (110)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼν ἄγρυπνος ἔφυν ὄρανοῦ στροφέοντος
 καὶ μὲν ἀμειβήσεος φαέος σκοτίης τε ταχείης.
 Οἱ ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
 ἡδὺν ἔχοντ' ὕπνον ἡμῶν εἰν νηϊ μελαίνῃ
 μοῦνος ἐγὼν αὐτὸς φοίτησά περ ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα (115)
 εὐδέμεναι ἀδυναστὸς ἐὼν κάματος σχέτο θυμόν.

Since this sheep-rearing asteroid was not terrible, many beautiful plants grew on it, flowers of all kinds grew in large numbers and fair. The odour of the sheep's dung wasn't so oppressive as it was before, since my nose had grown accustomed to it a little, and so we remained on the planet, receiving joy from nature. But it didn't please me to stay on the asteroid, since the changing of dawns and dusks was rapid, and so the rotation of the stars above in the dark sky was very swift, and the terrible whirling seized my head. And all the other beings on the planet, the sheep and their shepherd weren't concerned by it all. The shepherd slept in a cave for eight Earthly hours and he put the rest of his sheep to graze for sixteen, but I on the other hand became unable to sleep from the spinning of the sky, and from the rapid changing of light and darkness. All the rest of my trusty companions enjoyed sweet sleep in our black ship, I was the only one who'd strut here and there, and fatigue seized my heart since I was unable to sleep.

Ἀλλὰ σπέος μὲν ἐγὼν ἡῦρον κυνοκράτεο ἀνδρὸς
 ἔνδον δ' εἷσηλθον μὲν ἶδεν οἶκόν τε ὀρᾶσθαι
 αἰσχροτάτος κάματος καὶ ἐνοχλίῃ ἔλε θυμόν.
 Τὸν παρὰ ἐσχαρόφιν ἡῦρον εὔδοντ' ἐνὶ σπέσσιν (120)
 ἄνδρα κυνοκράτον τὸν μὲν καλέσαντο Βέλητα.
 Ἔστηκ' εἰν θύρηφι θεωροῦν μιν ἐνὶ ὕπνῳ.
 ἀλλὰ δὲ νῦν ποιμὴν ἦρξεν ὕπνῳ ἀγορεύειν
 καὶ μὲν ἐμοὶ τῷ ἀκουσάμενῳ ἄσπαιρε φίλον κῆρ
 ὥς ὁ κυνόκρατος γλώσση ἡμῶν ἐλάλησε. (125)
 Λάθρα δὲ ἦά γε θᾶσσον ἐγὼ ξεῖνον ποτὶ φῶτα
 ἀλλὰ γέ οἱ τε τύχον κεφαλῆς κυνάδος μάλα κούφως
 μάσκη μὲν κεφαλῇ γ' ἔσκεν· ἀποδὺς δέ μιν αὐτὴν
 Μανδύος αἰσχροτάτον βδελυρὸν μὲν ὅπωπα πρόσωπον.
 Σμεραλέως ἰάχων ἐσθλοὺς ἐκάλησα ἐταίρους (130)
 καὶ μὲν ἐπεσούμενός γε λάβον τὸν ἀνήνορα φῶρα
 ἠγερθεὶς ὕπνῳ Μανδὺς μάχετ' ὥς ἔχεν ἵνα
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς τις πρῆξις ἐφαίνετο μαρναμένῳ περ.

But then I found the dog-headed man's cave, and I went inside to understand and see his home, since the worst fatigue and boredom had seized my mind. I found him sleeping in the cave by the hearth, the dog-headed man whom they called Veles. I stood in the doorway watching him in his slumber. But now the shepherd began to talk in his sleep, and my dear heart throbbed as I listened, since the dog-headed man was babbling in my own language. Stealthily and swiftly I approached the alien, but very lightly touched his dog's head, but his head was a mask, and when I stripped it off, I could see Mandys' very ugly, disgusting face.⁹³³ I summoned my fine companions with a terrible scream, and then I captured this unmanly thief by throwing myself upon him, and once he'd roused from his sleep Mandys fought with as much strength as he had, but even so, no solution revealed itself to him as he struggled.

⁹³³ The fact that Veles was really Mandys all along poses some interesting points, namely that Mandys is aware that his zoophilia is seen as disgusting. His choice of the pagan Czech deity Veles is also interesting, since it carries with it a lot of (deceptive) Czech **nostalgia**. Gods in the *Astronautilia* are never what they seem at first glance.

Τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν ἰαχὴν ἤκουσαν πάντες ἐταῖροι
καὶ δὲ ταχῶς σπεῖός δε (135)

δράμον Μανδύν τε κράτησαν.

Δεσμοῖσιν λυγροῖσι δεδημένον ἴσχομεν ἄνδρα
γηθόσυνοι ὅτε ἔκπεμψιν τετελήκαμεν ἄνδρες
ἐξάετη πλήσαντες ἐνὶ κόσμοιο βάθεσσιν
θαύματα πλανήτων φυσέων ἐπὶ τῶν περ ἴδοντες
ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι ἐσθλοὺς ὀλέσαντες ἐταίρους (140)
Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.

Τὸν μὲν νῦν ἔχομεν Μανδὺν τὸν ἀνήγορα φῶρα
καὶ ἐγγὺς μὲν ἔην μῆλον ἰδίῳ ἐνὶ πλάνῃ.

Τοῦνεκα γηθόσυνοι τὸν νῦν ἐοράκαμεν ἄνδρα.
Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θέμενος ἐτάρους προσέειπον (145)
βουλὴν εἰρώτων περὶ Μανδύος καὶ ἐο μῆλου.

All my companions heard my cry and quickly ran to the cave and overpowered Mandys. We kept the man tied up in baneful chains, joyful that we had accomplished our mission after journeying for six years in the depths of the cosmos, and having seen the wonders of planets and the creatures on them, hazarding our lives and losing fine companions in our search for Mandys and the sheep who watches the cosmos. Now we had Mandys, the unmanly thief, and the sheep was nearby on this same planet. Which is why we now looked upon the man with joy. And then holding a meeting, I addressed my companions, asking their advice concerning Mandys and his sheep.

Book Ψ

*[Τοῦ Μανδύος ἀπάτη καὶ φυγὴ. Χρονοφυλάκτων ἄφιζις
καὶ ἐνίστασις. Οὐδενὸς καὶ Φράντου καὶ Τόνδου εἰς Τὸν
Μανδὸν θήρα]*

Ὡς μὲν ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θέμενος ἐτάρους προσέειπον
βουλὴν εἰρώτων περὶ μανδύος καὶ ἰδὲ μήλου
καὶ δέ τ' ἐμοῖς ἔταροις ἔπεα πτεροέντα προσηύδων·
«Κέκλυτέ μὲν μύθων πάντες ἐρήρηες ἐταῖροι.
Ἡμετέρη πέμψις γε φανεῖ τετελημένη εἶναι.⁹³⁴ (5)
Μανδὸν νῦν ἔχομεν δεσμοῖς κατεχόμενον ἄνδρα
καὶ μῆλον πλάνη τούτῳ ἰδίῳ δέει εἶναι.
Οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἴδμεν πᾶσιν μέτα τίδε τόδ' ἐστὶ
ἀλλὰ σαφῶς ἴδμεν πλάνη ἔμεναι ἐνὶ τούτῳ.
Ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν Μανδὺς πρόφρων δείξει ὅτι ἐστὶν (10)
ὥς ἔχομεν μεθόδους θέλγειν φρένας ἀνταγωνιστῶν⁹³⁵
ἀλλ' εἰ μὴ εἶπη Μανδὺς πρόβατον ὅτι δ' εἴη
ἀσφαλέες δὲ τόδ' ἐστὶν ἐπεὶ οὐ πλεῖν σχέτο Μανδύς.

⁹³⁴ cf. *Astr.* 14.11-12.

⁹³⁵ Note that in English, 'antagonist' is a technical word for the villain of a narrative.

Book 23

[Mandys' deceit and escape. The time-guardians' arrival and opposition. Oudeis', Franta's, and Tonda's hunt for Mandys]

So, holding a meeting, I addressed my companions, asking their opinion concerning Mandys and the sheep, and spoke to them in winged words:

"Listen to my words, my trusty companions. Our mission seems to have come to an end. We are currently in possession of Mandys, a man stuck in chains, and the sheep must also be on this particular planet. For we do not know which one amongst them all it is, but we know for certain that it is on this planet. But Mandys shall point out which one it is willingly, since we have methods of bewitching the minds of our opponents, but even if Mandys doesn't tell us which sheep it is, there's no risk, since Mandys is no longer in possession of it.

- Ἀλλὰ τε νῦν ζητῶ ὕμῶν νημερτέα βουλὴν
 εἴτ' ὀρθῶς Μανδὺν κτάμεναι φείσροισι λυγροῖσιν (15)
 εἴτ' εἰπόντα τό τι πρόβατον ἢ εἴτε καὶ οὐχὶ
 ἢ ἔ φέρειν εἰς γῆν βάθυσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
 ἡμετέρην γαίηνδε πόλινδ' τε καὶ φυλάκηνδε
 κρίνεσθαι μιν ἀπὸ κρίτων ἰδὲ καὶ κολάζεσθαι
 τοὺς κατὰ ἡμετέρους γε νόμους ὥς καὶ ἐπέοικεν.» (20)
 Ἔνθ' αὐτοὶ μὲν πάντες ἐπευφημήσαν ἑταῖροι
 πρῶτα δέ μιν θέλγειν δεῖξαι μῆλον ὅτι δ' εἶη
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ κτάμεναι Μανδὺν φείσροισι ὀλοοῖσιν.
 Ἀλλὰ γε νῦν Μανδὺς αὐτὸς ἦρξεν ἀγορεύειν·
 «Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων μάλα περ κοτέοντες ἑταῖροι⁹³⁶ (25)
 ὥς ἐμὲ κακτάμεναι οὔτις πρόθεσις δέ τ' ὕμ' ἐστι
 ἄλλ' εἰ ὕμ' ἔχεται τόδε μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Καὶ πρόφρων δείξω· κέρδος τοι οὔτι μοί ἐστι
 ἀλλὰ γε καὶ δείξω χρυσοῦ πυκνοῦ τὸ μετάλλον.
 Ἴσθε γε νῦν πάντες πλάνην χρυσοῦ τετύκεσθαι (30)
 τοῦ στερεοῦ καθαροῦ· οὐ γὰρ φύσεως τόδε ἔργον
 ἀλλὰ ἔ τι ζῶον μάλα πλούσιον καὶ φρόνιμόν τε
 τέχνησιν τεύξεν ἰδὲ καὶ κόσμονδε ἔηκεν
 ὥς δέ τε οὔ τι ἐοῖς προσσήκουσιν κτέμα δοῦναι
 ὅποτε τέθνηκεν καὶ μειρισθήσεται ὄλβος. (35)*

⁹³⁶ Remember, Mandys was originally one of the guards who kept watch over the sheep, specifically in charge of the locks, sensors, and computers (cf. *Astr.* 1.130-132).

But now I seek your infallible opinion, whether we should kill Mandys straightaway with our deadly phasers, whether he tells us which sheep it is or even if he does not, or whether we should carry him back to Earth through the depths of the empty cosmos, to our land, city, and prison, to be judged by judges and be given punishment according to our laws, as is the custom."

Then all my companions shouted in agreement to first bewitch him to point out which sheep it is, but then kill Mandys with our deadly phasers. But now Mandys himself began to speak:

"Listen to my words, even though you are very angry, my companions, since you have no purpose for killing me at all, if this sheep that watches the universe is in your possession. And I shall willingly point her out, since I no more have an advantage from it, what's more, I shall show you the mine of dense gold. Know now, you all, that this planet is made out of gold, firm and pure, for this is not a product of natural means, but some creature, very rich and intelligent, manufactured it with his technology, and sent it into the cosmos so as to not give any of his possessions to his relatives when he dies and his wealth be split up.

ἀλλὰ γε νῦν χρυσὸς ὑπὸ κόπρον πᾶς γε κέκευθεν
 καὶ χαλεπὸς δέ τ' ὀρυσσάμεναι κόπροιο καλυφθὶς
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ δείξω χρυσοῦ ἐσθλοῖο μέταλλον
 εἴ κεν ἄνεν μήλου με ἐάσατε ἀστροπορεύειν.»
 Ἔνθ' αὐτοὶ ἔταροι θράσυμον τὸ βάλον μέτα⁹³⁷ ἦτορ (40)
 καὶ ἔθελον χρυσὸν ἔχεμεν Μανδὺν δέ τε λῦσαι
 ἀλλὰ γε πρὶν δεῖξαι μήλον μαγικὸν ἐνὶ ποιίμῃ.
 Καὶ μὲν ἐμοὶ φρονέοντι δοάσσατο κέρδιον εἶναι
 καὶ ὥς Μανδὺς ἔφη τελέσαι ἐποιήσαμεν αὐτόν.
 Μῆλον μὲν δεῖξεν ἡμῖν χροσοῦ δὲ μέταλλον (45)
 ἦν σκαφὶν αὐτ' ἐπίβας πτάτ' ἄνω ἐς ἀπείρονα κόσμον
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ μήλω ἐπίθηκα τὸ χρῶμα φαεινὸν
 γράψας εἰν ἐρίῳ ὅτι δ' εἴη κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Ὡς ξανθὸς χρυσὸς ἀπατᾷ καὶ φῶτας ἀρίστους.
 Βῆμεν ἵμεν χρυσόν γε μετάλλῳ αἶψα ὀρύξαι (50)
 θυμὸν γηθόσυνοι ὅτι δ' ἄμμιν μισθὸς ἔνεστιν
 ἀστροπορευτήρεςσι κακὸν μέγα παθομένουσιν
 ἄντι δὲ σήκωσις τῶν τὰ κλόφε Κύπτα ἀεικής.
 Οὐδ' ἔτι μοι θυμὸς περ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι γέγηθεν
 Μαρμωνοῦ⁹³⁸ ἔνεκεν· κυνικός γε σοφὸς ἐγὼ εἰμί,⁹³⁹ (55)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ὅπως ἔταροί ἐθέλον μάλα σφόδρα ὀρύξαι.
 Οὕτως τῶν θυμοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς στάσεως ἔλε χρυσός.

⁹³⁷ Μεταβάλλω is a technical word for translation.

⁹³⁸ Mammon is the personification of wealth and greed in the New Testament.

⁹³⁹ cf. *Astr.* 7.105, 14.248.

But now the gold is entirely covered by dung, and it's difficult to dig out since it's hidden in dung, but I shall show you the mine of fine gold, if you should let me journey amongst the stars without the sheep."

Then my very companions changed their arrogant hearts, and desired to possess the gold and let Mandys go, but first he'll point out the magical sheep in the herd. And it seemed better to me too as I considered it, and so, just as Mandys said, we made him do it. He pointed out the sheep to us and then the mine of gold, then he boarded his ship again and flew up into the boundless cosmos, but I placed glowing paint on this sheep, writing on its wool that it was the one that watches the universe. This is how yellow gold deceives even the best men. We went to go quickly dig the gold out of the mine, feeling joy in our hearts since we had a reward after journeying amongst the stars and enduring great evil, and compensation for all the things that the vile Kypa had stolen. But the heart in my chest did not yet rejoice because of Mammon, since I am a cynical scientist, but regardless, my companions wanted to dig it out very violently, and so gold robbed their minds of mutinous thoughts.

Οὐ σκηλεύθροισιν χρυσὸν γε δύναντο ὀρύσσειν
 ἡμετέροις· μάλα γὰρ στερεὸν τὸ μέταλλον ἔσκεν
 ἀλλ' οὐ φείσροισιν ῥῆξαι χρυσὸν δὲ θέλοντο (60)
 μή ποτε τῶν φείσρων γώμωσις φθίσειτο ἡμῖν
 ἀλλὰ γε τεχνητῇ Βούρδης Τόνδης τε ῥοβώτης
 σέμτεξ κρηκτοφόρον⁹⁴⁰ ἐποίησάτην ἐτάροισιν.
 Ἦρξαν δ' ἐκρῆξαι ξανθὸν χρυσὸν διὰ σέμτεξ
 σμερδαλέοι κτῦποι εἰν ἀστροῖδῃ κροτέοντο (65)
 καὶ ὄϊες πεδίῳ σκέδασαν φοβοῦ ἄλλυδις ἄλλη.⁹⁴¹
 Ἀλλ' ἐπιγραμμόμενον μῆλον ὥς κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἔσπεσεν εἰς τρήμην κατεάξετο αὐχένα αὐτοῦ
 αἶψα δὲ τέθνηκεν⁹⁴² ἀλλ' οὔτι τύχεν ἐνὶ κόσμῳ.
 Μῆλον κακταμένον εἴλων ἐτάροισιν ἔδειξα (70)
 καὶ θαυμαζόμενοις ἔπα πτεροέντα προσηύδων·
«Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων ἔταροι νῦν ὄφρα τι εἶπω·
κοσμοθεωρόμενον ἡῦρον κταμένον τόδε μῆλον
αἰπεῖ' εἰν τρήμῃ· τόδ' ἐάξετο αὐχένα αὐτοῦ,
ἀλλὰ γε οὔτι τύχεν ἐνὶ κόσμῳιο βάθεσιν. (75)
Οὐ φανέρως καθαρὸν καὶ γνήσιον⁹⁴³ ἔσκε τὸ μῆλον
ἀλλὰ ἐ φαυλότατος Μανδὺς χαλεπὸν τι δέδειχεν.

⁹⁴⁰ A bahuvrihi compound formed from κρεκτός + φόρος, the suffix φόρος here indicates the result caused by the modified noun κρεκτός, i.e., 'explosive', lit. 'bang/strike causing'.

⁹⁴¹ cf. *Iliad* 11.486, 11.745, 12.461, 13.279, 17.729, 21.503, *Odyssey* 5.71, 5.369, 6.138, 9.458, 11.385, 14.25, 14.35.

⁹⁴² Note the asyndeton in the previous verse: this emphasises the speed by which the sheep fell and died.

⁹⁴³ Křesadlo has written γήσιον; both these terms are paternity related words which are also used by classical literary critics meta-literarily to describe pseudepigraphic works.

They weren't able to dig out the gold with our pickaxes, since the mine was very solid, but they didn't want to do it with our phasers lest the ammunition for our phasers run out, but the engineer Burda and Tonda the robot made an explosive Semtex⁹⁴⁴ for my companions. And they began to blast out the yellow gold with the Semtex, terrible crashing sounds were rattling in the asteroid, and the sheep scattered in fear on the plain, some this way and some that way. But the sheep inscribed as the one who watches the universe fell into a ditch, shattered its neck, and died at once, but nothing happened in the cosmos. I showed the slaughtered sheep I was holding to my companions, and I addressed them in winged words whilst they were astonished:

"Listen to my words, companions, I shall now tell you something: I found this sheep, the one that watches the universe, dead in a steep ditch. It snapped its neck, but nothing happened in the depths of the cosmos. This sheep is obviously not genuine and legitimate, but that most worthless Mandys had pointed out some wrong one to us.

⁹⁴⁴ A kind of plastic explosive invented in Czechoslovakia.

Ἀλλά γε σχέστε⁹⁴⁵ φίλοι χρυσὸν ζανθὸν ἀνακρῆζαι
 ὥς δὲ δέον εὖρειν πρόβατον ἰδιὸν τε δίκαιον
 οὐδ' ἔτι δεῖ κέρδος τυφλώσαι ὄμματα ὑμῖν
 χρυσοῦ ἀρπάζουσιν ἐπεὶ ἐπίκειται ἀνάγκη.
 Τοῦτο δέ μοι φρονέοντι δοάσσατο εἶναι ἄριστον·
 κοσμοθεωρούση φανερώς ὅϊς οὐ ποτε εὔδει
 αἰὲν κοσμοθεωρούση· ἄλλως γε ἅπαντα
 οὐχὶ δύναιτο μένειν ὥς μὲν μῆλον τὰ θεωρεῖ.
 (80)
 Νῦν ἡμῖν δέον ἐστὶ διασπᾶσαι πυκὰ μῆλα
 καὶ μικρὴν ποίμην⁹⁴⁶ συντάζαι φωτὶ ἐκάστω
 ἢ πεφυκότι ἢ πλαστῷ ἢ συντιθέντι
 σπουδαίως σκοπέειν διὰ εἴκοσι καὶ πίσυρές τε
 ὥρας τὰς χθονίας ὅτε μῆλα δέον κάτα εὔδειν.
 (85)
 Τί δ' ἄρα τῶν προβάτων οὐκ εὐδήσῃ ἐνὶ ποίμῃ
 τοῦτο δὲ δεῖ εἶναι τὸ τὸν κόσμον γε θεωρεῖ.»
 Ὡς ἐφάμην οἱ δ' αὐτέ με μύθων καὶ ἐπίθοντο.
 Αἶψα δὲ πίονα μῆλα διάσπασαν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
 καὶ μικρὴν ποίμην ἥρξεν τηρεῖσαι ἕκαστος
 (95)
 φῶς πεφυκὼς ἢ πλαστὸς ἐὼν ῥόβοτός τε καὶ ἀνὴρ.
 Οὕτως ἐξόμενοι μὲν ἐμείναμεν ὅττι δ' ἔγειρεν.

⁹⁴⁵ = σχέσθε (2nd person pl. aor. mp. imperat. of ἔχω).

⁹⁴⁶ Křesadlo must have meant to have written μικρὴ ποίμνη, since ποίμνη means 'shepherd', but the Czech translation has it as 'flock', ποίμνη.

But restrain yourselves, my friends, from blowing up the yellow gold, since we must find the right particular sheep, and greed should not still be blinding your eyes as you snatch up the gold, for necessity is pressing upon us. This seemed best to me as I thought about it: plainly, a sheep who watches the universe never sleeps, since it's always watching the universe, otherwise all things would be unable to stay in existence as when the sheep is watching them. Now we must separate the densely crowded sheep, and place a small flock under the command of each man, whether he be naturally born, or artificially created, or synthetic, in order to earnestly examine them continually for twenty-four Earthly hours, because the sheep must lie down to sleep. A certain one of the sheep in the flock shouldn't sleep, and this one must be the one that watches the universe!"

So I spoke, and they immediately obeyed by words. They divided the fat sheep up here and there, and they each began watching their small flock closely, be he a naturally born man, or one that was produced artificially, robot or human. And so we sat waiting for the one that would stay awake.

- Ἐνθα δὲ ἡμῖν ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτεν
 ἀνδράσι καὶ ρόβοτοισ· ὥς τοῖς συννοίαν ἔχουσιν
 ἔστι δέον παῦσαι ἥως τούτοις πεφυκῶσιν (100)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ ἀνέδυν γλυκεροῖσθε κώματος ἕξω
 βόμβον πυραύλου ὁόμην⁹⁴⁷ φθίνοντα ἀκοῦσαι.
 Αὐτίκα τοὺς ἄλλους ὕπνου πάντας δ' ἔκ ἔγειρα.
 Βῆμεν ἵμεν λέγεμεν προβάτων πάντων τὸν ἀριθμὸν
 τὸν γε τὰ πρῶτα τὸ πρῖν γε διασπᾶσαι πυκὰ μῆλα (105)
 λέξαμεν εἰν ποίμῃ.⁹⁴⁸ τὸν νῦν οἱ λέξαν ἔπειτα.
 Ἀλλὰ δὲ ἐν μῆλον φανερώς νυν ἀφίστατο ποίμῃ.
 Ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἔνορτο γόος πᾶσιν ἐτάροισιν
 εἰδόντων ὅτ' ἔπειτα τέλος ἀποδέδραμε πόμπης.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ κόρεσαν θυμὸν λυγροῖο γόοιο (110)
 τοῖσιν ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θέμενος ἔπεα προσέειπον·
*«Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων κακὰ περ πάσχοντες ἐταῖροι
 ἡμῖν αὖτε ὁδὸς εἰς κόσμον ἀβένθεα κεῖται
 Μανδὺν ἐλαυνέμεναι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 ἢ χαλεπὴ κούφη τ' ἄμφω θαυμαστὰ τέτυκτο. (115)
 Ἔστιν ὁδὸς χαλεπὴ· Μανδὺν ἐθέλει γε νέεσθαι
 εἰς χρόνον εἰς προτέοντά τε κινδύνει τὰ τ' ἐόντα,
 καὶ τὸ δέον ἡμῖν ἀρπᾶζει πρὶν τὰ γένοιτο –
 ἀλλὰ γε καὶ κούφη ὥς ἴδμεν τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ
 εἶναι ἐς γαίην καὶ ἐς χρόνον αὖ προτέοντα. (120)*

⁹⁴⁷ = οἶομαι (φύομην).

⁹⁴⁸ = ποίμνη.

And then sleep fell upon our eyelids, for both men and robots, since those who have deep thoughts need to rest, just as those that have been naturally born must too. But then when I rose up out of my sweet deep slumber, I thought I could hear the booming of a rocket dwindling away. I immediately woke all the others from their sleep. Then we went to go count up the number of all the sheep, as we initially counted them up before the fat sheep were divided into their flock: they did this again now. But a single sheep was evidently missing now from the flock. And then unquenchable lamentation rose up amongst all my companions from the knowledge that the end of our mission had run away again. But when they had satisfied their hearts with sorrowful lamentation, I held a meeting and addressed them in this speech:

“Listen to my words, even though you have suffered misfortune, my companions, a journey into the bottomless cosmos lies ahead of us once more to fetch Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe: whether it is difficult or easy, both are extraordinary. It is a difficult journey, since Mandys wants to go back in time to the past, and he endangers the present, and so we must capture him before that happens – but it is also easy, since we know that his journey is headed towards Earth and to a past time.

- Ἀλλ' ἄγε αἶψα θοὴν ἐπιβήσας' εὐεργέα νῆα
 πτησόμεθ' εἰς κόσμον τὸν ἀστροῖδην λελιπόντες.»*
 Τοῦ ἔτι μυθομένου μὲν ἐμεῦ ἦλθεν μεγαφώνῳ
 καρτοτάτῃ φωνή τοι ἄνωθεν οὐρανοῦ⁹⁴⁹ ἔξω.
 Θαμβήσαντ' ἑταροὶ παντὲς πλοίαρχος ἔγωγε (125)
 καὶ ὅιες πεδίῳ σκέδασαν φοβοῦ ἄλλυδις ἄλλη.
 Ἀλλὰ γε ἡ φωνὴ ἔπεα πρεροέντα προσήνυδα
 γλώσση ἡμετέρῳ ~ φανερώς μεταθήτορα εἶχον –
 «Κέκλυτε νῦν μύθων φῶρες χαλεποὶ καὶ ἀνάνδρες
 ἡμεῖς χρονοφυλακρῆρες τυγχάνομεν εἶναι (130)
 ἦλθομεν ἀρπᾶσαι ἡμῖν πληκτῆρα χρόνοιο
 φωρίδιον τὸν νῦν διδόναι πάλιν ἐστὶν ἀνάγκη.
 Εἰ μὴ δῶτε πάλιν κ' ἡμῖν πληκτῆρα χρόνοιο
 ὑμῖν νῆά τε ἀστροῖδην νυν ὀλλέσσαμεν αἰσχυρῶς
 φεισρόμολοις μεγάλοις οὐ γάρ τε τύχη ὑπαλῦξαι (135)
 τὸν δότε αἶψα πάλιν εἰ μὴ σάος αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.»
 Ἦ φωνὴ μεγάλη ἄμι καὶ ἦτορ κατεκλάσθη.
 Αὐτίκα τοῖς ἐτάροις εἶπον λάθροισι ἐπέσσιν.

⁹⁴⁹ ἄνωθεν ἐκ οὐρανοῦ/ὁ οὐρανός seems to be a Christian idiom, cf. *Septuagint* Genesis 27:39, 49:25, Eusebius *Commentary on Psalms* 23.965.17, 23.1024.3, 23.1344.4, and more from other Christian theologians.

But come now, we should board our swift, well-built ship at once, and fly into the cosmos, leaving this asteroid behind.”

As I was still speaking, a very powerful voice came through a megaphone from out of the heavens above, and all my companions were alarmed, including myself, the ship’s captain, and the sheep scattered in fear on the plain, some going this way, some that way. But then the voice addressed us in winged words in our own language ~ they clearly had a translator –

“Listen now to my words, you irksome and unmanly thieves: we, the time-guardians, took a chance on being here, we came to take back our time-weaver, so now it is necessary for you to give the stolen item back. If you should not give the time-weaver back to us, then we shall now destroy your ship and this asteroid in an outrageous manner, for there is no chance of escaping from our mighty phaser-cannons, so give it back at once, and if you don’t, then utter destruction is guaranteed.”

So the mighty voice spoke, and our hearts shattered. I immediately spoke to my companions in this speech:

«Κέκλυτέ μεν μύθων κακά περ πάσχοντες ἑταῖροι·
νῦν ὑμῖν δέον ἐστὶ φυλακτῆρας καταρύκειν⁹⁵⁰ (140)

τῆμος νῦν μὲν ἐγὼ νηὸς σκαφὶν ἔτ' ἐπιβήσω
σὺν Φράντῃ ροβότῳ καὶ Τονδῇ καὶ μήχους τε
τῷ πλεκτῆρι τε καὶ σχιστῆρι θοοῖο χρόνιο
Μανδὺν ἐλαννέμεναι⁹⁵¹ καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
Οἱ μὲν ἐπεὶ ὄψονται ἕως φεύγω ἀπὸ πλάνου (145)

ἐμαυτὸν γε διωκέμεναι ἄρξουσιν φύλακτες
ὑμᾶς νῦν λείψουσιν ἐπεὶ οὐκ ὄγκοι ἔσεσθε
οὐδ' ὑμᾶς κολάσαι τούτων ἔσται διανοία
ὥς τοῖς τὸν πλεκτῆρα ἔκλεφεν Φράντα ροβώτης
ἀλλὰ γε ὅς τ' ἔσται σκάφει πλείων σὺν ἐμεῦ περ. (150)

Ἀλλ' ὑμῖν δομέναι ἔσται γαίηνδε δόμονδε
μούνῃ νῦν πέμψις· τῷ χαίρετε ἐσθλοὶ ἑταῖροι.
Ἀλλὰ γε πλοίαρχον ποίω Βούρδην πολύμητιν.
Ἀλλ' ἄγε· ἄρξατε νῦν ἔπεσιν τούτους καταρύκειν.»
Ὡς ἐφάμην· Βούρδης ἦρξεν τοῖσιν ἀγορεύειν (155)

ῥηδιοφωνεύτων· τῷ καὶ γε φύλακτες ἄκουον.
Αὐτὰρ Φράντα ρόβως ἠχογραφέην⁹⁵² ἐποίησεν
μαγνητουφώνῳ⁹⁵³ γλώσση κοράμοιο φυλάκτων
ὃς Φράντην ἐφίλησε ἕως πρῶτον κατέλεξα.

⁹⁵⁰ = κατερύκω.

⁹⁵¹ Křesadlo has written ἐλανέμεναι.

⁹⁵² From the modern Greek word for 'sound recording',
ηχογράφηση, lit. 'a written copy of a returned sound'.

⁹⁵³ From the modern Greek word for 'tape recorder', μαγνητόφωνο
(magnetophone), lit. 'magnetic voiced'.

“Listen to my words, even though you have suffered misfortunes, my companions: you must now hold the guardians back until I can board our ship’s skiff along with the robot Franta and Tonda and the machines, namely the weaver and scissors of swift time, in order to fetch Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. But when they see that I am fleeing from the planet, the guardians shall start pursuing me, now they shall leave you behind, since you aren’t important to them, nor will they have the intention of punishing you, since it was the robot Franta that stole the weaver from them, but he shall be on the skiff sailing with me. But the only mission now for you is to return to Earth and your homes, rejoice in that, my fine companions. So I am making Burda of many devices the ship’s captain. But come now, start holding them back now with words.”

So I spoke, and Burda began speaking to them on the radiophone, and the guardians listened to him. But the robot Franta had made with his tape-recording tongue an audio recording of the leader of the guardians, who loved Franta just as I had described earlier.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ σκάφεος ἔνδον δ' εἰσβήσαμεν αὐτοί (160)
 Φράντα μεταφρήζων καὶ τεχνόνομος ἰδὲ Τόνδα
 ἧ καὶ ἔγωγε φέρων χρόνου αἰσχρὰ τεχνήματα ἄμφω
 ὅψ Φράντου ἦρξεν κοράμφω τούτων ἀγορεύειν
 μειλίχιοις ἔπεσιν θέλγειν ὥς μήτι ποῖοι τοῖς
 Φράντ' αὐτῷ ἄλλοιος ἰδὲ τοῖς ἐτάροις πτολίπορθοις (165)
 καὶ δέ τε οἷ φιλότητα αἰωνομένην ὑπότεινεν
 Ὅκνησεν δ' ἄρχων οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅττι ποίεσθαι.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼ σὺν τῷ σκάφεϊ τε δυοῖν γε ἐταίροιιν
 ἐπταμεθ' εἰς κόσμον τὸν ἀστροῖδην λελιπόντες
 Μανδὺν ἐλαυνέμεναι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν. (170)

And when we had boarded inside the skiff ourselves, Franta the translator and the technician Tonda and I, carrying both of the outrageous time-machines, then Franta's voice began speaking to their leader, trying to charm him with soft words to not do anything to them, either to Franta himself or to the rest of my city-sacking companions, and he also promised him his eternal love. The leader hesitated, not knowing what to do. But I, along with the skiff and my two companions, flew into the cosmos, leaving the asteroid behind us in order to fetch Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe.

Book Ω

[Ἡ τοῦ Μανδύος καὶ τοῦ μήλου ἄρπαξις. Ἡ τῆς ἀοιδῆς
καταστροφή καὶ τὸ τέλος]

Δηρὸν μὲν πλέομεν βάθεσιν κόσμοιο κενοῖο
Μανδὺν ἐλαυνόμενοι καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
Τὸ σκάφος ἴθυνον δ' ἀβενθέα χάσματα κόσμου
ἡμέτερον ποτὶ ἥελιον καὶ μητέρα Γαῖαν
εἰδὼς τὸν Μανδὺν νοστησέμεναι⁹⁵⁴ μεμαῶτα (5)
αἶψα δέ μιν τοι ἴδον αἰσθητήρων ἐν ὀθώνῃ⁹⁵⁵
καὶ μοι εἰσορόωντι ὀτρύνετο θυμὸς ἀγῆνων
καὶ μιν ῥαδιοφωνήσας ἔπεσιν προσέειπον·
«Σχὲς φεύγειν ὦ Μάνδν ἐπεὶ σοι ἐγγὺς ἰκάνω
καὶ ἰδὲ φεισροβόλῳ σε βαλῶ διὰ αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον (10)
οὐδ' ἔτι σοὶ τις πρῆξις ἐμῆς φύγεμεν ἀπὸ νηὸς
ρίμφα μάλα πλείουσι ἐπεὶ θάσσω σέο εἰμι.
Ἄλλ' ἄγε σχὲς φεύγειν κλεφθὲς μοι δὸς ἄπο μῆλον.
Αὐτὸς σὺν χρυσῷ πλεῖ ὄπον περ θυμὸς ἄνωγοι
εἰ μὴ νῆα θοὴν φεῖσροισι ὀλοοῖσι βάλοιμι.» (15)
Ὡς ἄρ' ἔφην ὃ με δ' αὖτις ἀμείβετο κερτομέος⁹⁵⁶ κῆρ.

⁹⁵⁴ *Nostos* is a key theme of the *Odyssey*, as well as the *Astronautilia*: the theme of *return* stems from Křesadlo's own exile from Czechia.

⁹⁵⁵ With the meaning of the modern Greek οθόνη, '(computer/ **cinema**) screen, monitor': the **televised gaze**.

⁹⁵⁶ = κερτόμιος, cf. *Iliad* 1.539, 2.256, 4.6, 5.419, *Odyssey* 9.474, 18.350, 20.177, 24.240, Hesiod *Theogony* 545, *Works and Days* 788, Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 1.485.

Book 24

[The seizure of Mandys and the sheep. The dénouement and end of the poem]

We sailed for a long time through the depths of the empty cosmos, chasing Mandys and the sheep who watches the universe. I steered the skiff through the bottomless chasms of the cosmos, towards our sun and Mother Earth, knowing that Mandys was trying to make his return. And I suddenly saw him on the monitor for the sensors, and my courageous heart stirred in me when I saw, and I addressed him in this speech on the radiophone:

“Stop fleeing, o Mandys, since I have come near you, and I will shoot you with my phaser-cannons to achieve your utter destruction. You no longer have any way of fleeing from my ship, it is sailing very swiftly, since I am faster than you. But come now, stop fleeing, and return the sheep that you’d stolen. Then sail by yourself with the gold wherever your heart bids you, if you don’t, then I shall shoot your swift ship with my deadly phasers.”

So I spoke, but he replied to me again with a mocking heart:

«*Νήπιος ἔσσι' Οὐδείς καὶ συρρηκτὸς*⁹⁵⁷ *ἀπὸ κόσμου*
ὥς μ' ὄτεις μῆλου δοῦναι πάλιν ὥς ἀγορεύεις.
Εἴ τις καὶ ἔθελοί με ἔλιν καὶ κῆρα ὀπάσσαι
καὶ γὰρ τὸν γε δύναμι ἀπείλιν τοῦ διὰ μῆλου (20)

κακταμέναι μεμαῶς τόδ' ἀπείλημ' ἔσται ἀπάντων
ζῶων εἰν κόσμῳ ὕλης ζακενοῦ τε χρόνον τε
ἀλλ' ἄγε νῆα θοὴν τρέψαι δόμεναι τε πάλινδε
ὥς οὐπῶς γε δύνῃ εἴλιν Μανδὺν πολύμητιν.»

ᾠς φάτο Μάνδῡς ἀνὴρ αὐτὰρ φείσφω ἔβαλόν μιν. (25)

ἰσχυρὴ σκαφίς ἦν τοῦ Μανδύος οὔτε τύχεν οἱ
πλεῖν ἐλελιζέμεναι πλοῖον καὶ ἀνήνορα φώρα.
Αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ ὀθόνης αὐτοῦ ἀφανίσετο πλοῖον
καὶ τότε ἔγὼν ἐνόησα χρόνονδ' ἐτέρονδε κυβιστᾶν
οὔδ' ἀλλ' ἐγὼ περ οἶδα (30)

πόσον χρόνον ἦρε κυβιστῶν
ὥς ὅδε Μανδύς τοι εὔρειν δυνάσαιτο ἕκαστον.
Τοῦνεκά μοι φρονέοντι τὸ κῆρ στρέφετ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.
Εἰς τέλος τοῦ Γρογαλοῦ τὸν μνῆμα λόγον κρουπήκτου
Μανδὺν φευγόμενον φεύξιν εἰς τὰ προτ' ἔοντα
*τοῦ χρυσοῦ ἔνεκεν καὶ ὄλβου χρυσογενήτῃ*⁹⁵⁸ (35)

ἡμετέρῃ γαίῃ· τότε μοί γε δοάσσατο εἶναι
*εἰς τέλος εἰκόστης ἑκατονταέτηρος*⁹⁵⁹ *ἀλῶξαι*
Μανδὺν ἀεικέλιον πιθανώτατον· ὥς οἱ ἔοικεν
πουλὺν χρυσὸν ἔχειν καὶ πλούσιον ὥς τετύκεσθαι
ἀλλ' ἄδην τέχνων λιπαρὴν ζωὴν περ ἔχεσθαι. (40)

⁹⁵⁷ = συρρήγνυμι.

⁹⁵⁸ cf. *Astr.* 19.92.

⁹⁵⁹ cf. *Astr.* 6.290; i.e., the 1990's, when the *Astronautilia* was being composed.

“You’re a fool, Oudeis, and a wreck from the cosmos, since you think that I’ll give the sheep back just as you’ve described. If someone should also wish to catch me and inflict death upon me, then I can destroy him by the use of this sheep: should I intend on killing it, then it shall threaten all living things in the cosmos, as well as matter in the vacuum of space, and time. But go now, turn your swift ship around and go back, since it is not at all possible for you to capture me, Mandys of many tricks.”

So Mandys spoke, but I however shot him with my phaser. Mandys had a sturdy skiff, and nothing happened to it except for that the vessel and the unmanly thief started trembling. The vessel immediately disappeared from my monitor, and then I realised that he’d piloted into another period of time, but I didn’t know what time he was able to pilot to, since this Mandys might’ve been able to find ways to each one. Which is why my heart twisted this way and that way as I thought about it. In the end, I remembered what the Grogal that was frozen in ice had said, that Mandys in his escape would flee into the past, on account of the gold and the prosperity that would come from the gold on our Earth. Then it seemed to me that it was very plausible for the disgraceful Mandys to escape to the end of the twentieth century, since it seemed best for him, as he had much gold, so he would be wealthy, but he would also have a cushy life, with plenty of technology.

Ἀλλά γε πειράζων χρονοπλεκτῆρα ποιήσα
 εἰς ἐμὲ εἰκόστην ἑκατονταέτηρα βάλεσθαι
 ἥματι τῷ ἰδίῳ ἰδὲ μῆνί τε καὶ ἐνιαυτῷ
 τῷ νυν ἐπιχθονίῳ ἔσκον πτάμενος διὰ κόσμον
 ἄλλα δέ μοι ποιοῦντι τάχα σκότος ὅσσε κάλυπεν (45)
 καὶ ὀλιγοδραμέων γνώμην ἔχον ὥς τόδε μῆλον
 παύσατο σκεπτεσθαι νῦν ὄντα ἀπείρονα κόσμον
 ὃν γ' εἶν τῷ προτ' ἐόντι τέ μοι σάος αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.
 Ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἐγὼ περόνην πίερων μηχανήματος αὐτὸς.
 Ἄψ μὲν ἠγέρθην ζωὸς ὢν νηὶ μελαίνῃ (50)
 καὶ Μανδύν γε πάλιν λεῦσσον νῦν πρόσθεν ἐόντα
 ῥίμφα μάλα πτάμενον· τόδε γήθησεν φίλον ἥτορ.
 τὴν μὲν αὐξήσας δύναμιν τὴν νῆα ἐλαύνειν
 ἥρξα διωκέμεναι Μανδὺν κλέπτῃν τε ὄϊν τε.
 Ἀλλά γε μὲν χαλεπὸν ἦεν τὸν φῶτα κιχῆσαι (55)
 ὥς χρόνιος προτ' ἐόντα χρόνονδε ἔδου ἐνὶ κόσμῳ
 καὶ μερμεισάμενος⁹⁶⁰ μάλα δὴν περὶ ποῦ τί ποιῆσαι.
 Μικρὴ μὲν σκαφὶς ἦν μούνου ἀνδρὸς ἐπίβηται
 ἀλλά γε ῥηϊδίον ἰδὲ καὶ ταχὺ κοσμοπορευεῖν
 ἀλλά δέ μοι πολ' ὀπίσσω ἔῃν σκαφὶς κοσμοπορευτά. (60)

⁹⁶⁰ = μερμηρίζω.

So, as a test, I made the time-weaver shoot me into the twentieth century, on a particular day and month and year; and now I was flying through the cosmos in the concurrent Earthly time, but a darkness quickly covered my eyes as I did so, and as I became weak I had the idea that the sheep had now stopped observing the currently existing boundless cosmos, since it's in the past and my utter destruction was certain. But still I managed to press the machine's button myself. I immediately regained my energy and was alive on my black ship, then I gazed back at Mandys who was now ahead of me, flying very swiftly, which made my dear heart rejoice. Increasing the power that propelled my ship, I began pursuing the thief Mandys and the sheep. But it was difficult to catch up with the man, since he had come into this past time in the cosmos a long time ago, and anxiously debated for a very long time about what I could possibly do. His skiff was small enough for a single man to board, but it could easily and quickly traverse the cosmos, but my skiff however was very far behind in its journey through the cosmos.

Οὕτως μὲν φερόμεσθα διαὶ κόσμοιο βάραθρα
 ἡμέτερον πρὸς ἥλιον καὶ μητέρα Γαῖαν,
 εἰς τέλος εἰκόστη χρούνου ἑκατονταέτηρος.
 Οὐδὲ τί μοι δύναμις ἔσκειν τὸν φῶτα κιχῆσαι
 πρίν γ' ἔχαλινέμεναι σκαφὶν εἰν γαίης περικύκλω. (65)
 Τῷδε κίχησα ἐγὼ Μανδὺν τὸν ἀνήνορα φῶρ.
 καὶ μιν ῥαδιοφωνεύων ἔπεσιν προσέειπον·
*«Σχῆς φεύφειν ὦ Μάνδῳ ἐπεὶ σοι ἐγγὺς ἰκάνῳ
 καὶ δύναμαι βάλεμεν εἰς ἔσσομένην ἰδὲ ὥρην
 τῇ ἥρξας φεύγειν καὶ ἐγὼ ζητεῖν ἐνὶ κόσμῳ. (70)
 Ἀλλὰ μὲν ἔσσομένῳ τότε τοι χρόνῳ ὥς γε τέτυκται
 πολλοὶ ναυτῆρες κόσμου καὶ πλοῖα ἔασιν
 τοὺς μὲν ἐγὼ δύναμαι συναγείρειν ὅττι τάχιστα
 ῥαδιοφωνήσας· τότε τοι σάος αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.»*
 Ὡς ἐφάμην ὃ με οὔτι ἀμείβετο Μανδὺς ἀνήνωρ (75)
 ἀλλὰ γε φεισροβόλῳ ἔβαλεν σκαφὶν αἰψαπορευήν.
 Αὐτὰρ ἔγω γε πάλιν γ' ἔβαλον καὶ πλοῖον ἑαυτοῦ.
 ἄμφω τὼ πλοῖω φεῖσροισ βεβλημένῳ ἦτον
 οὐλομένοις· ἄμφοιν ἐγγὺς ἦν αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.

And so we were conveyed through the depths of the cosmos, towards our sun and Mother Earth, towards the end of the twentieth century's time-period. But I had no power to catch up with the man until he had bridled his skiff into Earth's orbit. At which point I caught up with the unmanly thief, Mandys. And I addressed him in a speech on the radiophone:

"Stop fleeing, o Mandys, since I am near enough to you, and I can shoot you back into the future period of time in which you began fleeing and I began seeking you throughout the cosmos. But at that point in the future, as has already happened, there are many cosmonauts and vessels that I am able to gather together as quickly as I can call them on my radiophone: your utter destruction is certain at that moment."

So I spoke, and the unmanly Mandys made no reply to me, but rather shot my swift-sailing skiff with his phaser-cannon. But I however shot him and his vessel back. And both are vessels were shot with deadly phasers, and utter destruction was near at hand for both of us.

- Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐγὼν εἶδον αἰσθητήρων ἐν ὀθώνῃ (80)
 Μανδὺν νῆα θοὴν λείποντα ἐνὶ σκαφόανδρι
 κύστιν πυραύλον ἐν ὤμοιν φῶτα ἔχοντα
 σὺν αὐτῷ μήλω· ἴδιον τὸ μὲν εἶχε σκάφανδρα
 – ἡ σκάφοϊν – Μανδὺς μεγάλην τοῦ εἶχε μέλητιν.⁹⁶¹
 Ῥίμφα μάλα πτάμενος ἦλθεν σὺν τῷ ποτὶ Γαῖαν (85)
 ἀλλὰ γε νῦν φανερώς χρυσὸν λίπε τῷ ἐνὶ πλοίῳ.
 Ἀλλὰ δ' ἐμὸν πλοῖον χαλεπῶς βεβλημένον ἦεν
 καὶ τάχα ἦρξεν ἀῆρ φεύγειν σκαφέος ἄπο αὐτῆς
 εἰν χαλεπὸς δὲ κρυὸς τοι ἦρξεν νηὶ ὑφέρπειν
 οὐδ' ἔτι πλεῖν δυνατόν γ' ἦν αὐτὴν νῆα ιδύνειν. (90)
 Ταῦτα δέ μοι εἶδοντι κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 αὐτίκα τὸν σκαφόανδρα ἔδυν χροὶ ὅττι τάχιστα
 ἀλλὰ γε τὸν Φράντην δὲ κόρυσδε σκαίφανδρος ἔθηκα
 ὥς θερμὸν καὶ ἀῆρα ἔχοι· βιοπλαστὸς μὲν ἔσκεν.
 ἀλλὰ γε τὸν Τόνδην ῥόβοτον στεροῖο μετάλλου (95)
 μούνως ὥς ἦν εἶλον ἐπεὶ μήχος ὃ τέτυκτο
 νηὸς ἔκ ἀΐζας γε πέσον δνοφέρον διὰ χάσμα
 πυραύλῳ πτάμενος ἰθύνων μιν ποτὶ γαίην.

⁹⁶¹ = μέλημα.

But then I saw on the monitor for the sensors that Mandys had abandoned his swift ship in a space suit, and the man was carrying a jet-pack on both his shoulders along with the sheep itself, which had its own space suit – or sheep suit – since Mandys had great concern for it. He came flying very quickly with it towards Earth, and he'd now clearly left the gold back on his vessel. But my vessel on the other hand was terribly damaged, and the air began to quickly leave from my very skiff, and a terrible chill began creeping into the ship, and it was no longer possible to steer the ship itself. My dear heart shattered when I saw this, and I put a space suit over my skin as quickly as possible, and then I put Franta in the helmet of the space suit, since he should have warmth and air, as he was made out of living flesh. But I took the robot Tonda, since he was a machine that was made out of only solid metal, then leaping from the ship, I fell through the murky chasm, flying with a rocket, directing it towards Earth.

Αἶψα δὲ ταῦτα τέτυκτο κρατὺς τ' ἐπείκειτο ἀνάγκη
 ὥς νῦν ναυήγω ἄμφω γαίην πετόμεσθην (100)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἔπειτα πέσον μὲν ἐγὼ ζακενῶθε χαμαῖζε
 αὐτίκα τὸν σκαφοάνδρ' ἀπέδυν ἐγὼ ὅττι τάχιστα
 καὶ Φράντην ρόβοτον αὖτις εἶλον κορύθηφι
 καὶ μένεμεν Τόνδην ρόβοτον καταθερμοίνεσθαι
 καὶ τὸν ἐνέργον ἐπεὶ τύχομεν ρόβοτον πολύμητιν. (105)
 ἀλλὰ δ' ἐπεὶ Τονδης ρόβοτος γνώμην ἀνάσωσεν⁹⁶²
 τοῦ νῶτον ἐπιβήσαντες τρέχομεν ἐνὶ χέρσῳ
 Μανδὺν ζητοῦντες καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν.
 Ἦν Τόνδης ρόβοτος μεγάλη μὲν ἀράχνη ἐοικῶς⁹⁶³
 ἐκ χαλύμβου· πολλοὺς γε πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἔχεσκεν (110)
 σῶμα δέ ὡς σφαῖραν πολέσιν αἰσθητήρεσσιν.
 Ῥίμφα μάλα τροχέων με φέρεν τε μεθήτορα γλώσσων.
 Τί πρῶτον τίδ' ἔπειτα τίδ' ὑστάτιον καταλέξω
 τῆς δε διωκησοῦς πέρι Μανδύος ἢ ὄϊος τε;⁹⁶⁴
 Μοῦνον τοῦτό γ' ἔπος εἶη μακρὸν δολιχόν τε (115)
 εἴ κεν ἐγὼν ἐθέλοιμι διαὶ τά γε πάντα ἐνίσπειν·

⁹⁶² = ἀνασφύζω.

⁹⁶³ cf. *Astr.* 12.344.

⁹⁶⁴ Common epic trope of trying to create the impression of improvised performance (*festinatio*).

These things happened quickly, and necessity pressed upon us strongly. So now both of us, shipwrecked, were falling to Earth, but whilst I was falling down to Earth from the vacuum of space, I immediately took off my space suit as quickly as possible, and took the robot Franta out of the helmet again, and then waited for the robot Tonda to warm up and for the robot of many devices to become energetic again. But when the robot Tonda regained consciousness, and climbing onto his back, we moved quickly to the ground, seeking Mandys and the sheep that watches the universe. The robot Tonda resembled a mighty spider made out of steel, he had numerous arms and legs, and his body was like a sphere with many sensors. He carried me and my translator of languages, whilst moving very quickly. Concerning the chase for Mandys and the sheep, what should I narrate first, what next, and what at the end? This epic alone would be long and tedious, if I should wish to narrate everything all the way through:

ὥς Μανδῦς κλέψεν πρῶτον τὴν μωτοσυκλήτην
αὐτοκίνητον ἐπεὶ πυμάτου ἰδὲ ἡλικόπτερον
καὶ ὥς μιν μὲν ἄμες γε διώκομεν ὅττι τάχιστα
σχήμασι παμπόλλοις κατ' ἀῆρα τε καὶ κατὰ πόντον (120)
δουλιχίον δ' εἶη τὸ ἔπος χαλεπὸν καὶ ἐνισπείν.
Εἰς τέλος καὶ ἔλομεν καὶ οὐ τῷ ἦν ὑπάλυξαι.
Ἀλλὰ ὁ νῦν ἐρύσας κοπὴν ὀξεῖήν ἀπὸ κάψης
μήλω αὐχένι θῆκε τε καὶ μῦθον ἀγόρευεν·
«Εἴ κεν νῦν Οὐδεις θήσης στιβαρὰς ἄνα χεῖρας (125)
μήλου ἡμετέρου ἢ σὺ ἢ τοῖν ῥόβοτοῖν τις
αἶψα δ' ἐγὼ κτανέω μῆλον καὶ κόμου ἅπαντα.»
Ὡς φάτο· ἀλλὰ δ' ἐμοί γε κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
κίνδυνον κόσμου πάντος ἐγγὺν ὀρόωντι.
Ἀλλὰ δέ μοι ῥόβοτος Φράντης τί γε λάθρα ἔειπεν (130)
ῥαδιοφώνησας μικρόν δε ἐμὸν παραληπτὴν⁹⁶⁵
τὸν μὲν ἐγὼν εἶχον εἶν οὔατι αὐτὰρ ἔγωγε
βάκτρῳ ἐπεσσύμενος μῆλον τὸν τύπον⁹⁶⁶ κεφαλῇνδε
ἦδε λιποψύχησεν ὅς πεδίονδε πέσουσα
αὐτὰρ σμερδαλέῃ ἰαχῇ Μανδῦς ἐφόβησεν (135)
οὔδ' ἄρα τίδε τύχεν κόσμῳ ἰδὲ τῷ γε τόπῳ τε
ὥς χαλεπὸν κλέψεν μῆλον ὥς κοσμοθεωροῦν
καὶ τὸ λίπεν καθαρὸν εἶν ἀστροῖδῃ ἴδιον τε.

⁹⁶⁵ From the modern Greek for 'receiver', παραλήπτης.

⁹⁶⁶ = τύπω.

how Mandys had first stolen a motorcycle, then an automobile, and finally a helicopter, and how we chased him as quickly as possible, in all kinds of ways, by air and by sea. But the epic would be long and difficult to narrate. Then we caught him at last and he had no way of escaping. But now he, drawing a sharp dagger from his pocket, put it to the sheep's throat, and gave this speech:

"If you, Oudeis, now lay your sturdy hands upon my sheep, whether you or one of your two robots do, I shall immediately slaughter the sheep and the entirety of the cosmos along with it."

So he spoke, and my dear heart shattered when I saw that danger was close to the entire cosmos. But the robot Franta said something to me secretly, sending a message with his radiophone to my small receiver that I kept in my ear, but then I, charging at the sheep, hit it on the head with a stick, and the sheep fell to the floor unconscious, and then with a terrible scream Mandys was terrified, but nothing happened to the cosmos or to this place, since he'd stolen the wrong sheep as the one that watches the universe, since he had left the right particular one behind on that asteroid.

Ἄλλ' ἥμῳς ἦλθον πρὸς ταῦτον χρονοφύλακτες
 φεισροβόλοις ὀλοοῖσι δέ τ' ἀστροῖδην καταβάλλον (140)
 ὅδ' ἐλέλιξεν ὅλος καὶ τοῖς σκότος ὅσσε κάλυψεν
 ὥς ἀποψύχησαν βραχέως πρόβατον τὸ δίκαιον
 κοσμοθεωράον ὄν· τὸ λίπεν μὲν Μανδὺς ὀπίσσω.
 Οὕτως ἔγνωσαν δ' ὅτι πάντα ἀληθῆα ἦεν
 οἷα δὲ τοῖς εἶπαν εἰν εἰργμῶ τμήματι αὐτῶν. (145)
 καὶ νῦν εἰρήνην θέμενοι σὺν ἑμοῖς ἐτάροισιν
 ἦλθον ζητοῦντες εἰν Γαῖαν καὶ πρότερον τε
 ἡμᾶς· καὶ ἐμὲ πλοίαρχον καὶ τὼ ροβότω τε.
 Ἀλλὰ γε ραδιοφώνησαν πολυφρονι Φράντη
 καὶ τῷ καὶ εἶπον ὅτι οὐκ ἔμεναι ἐνὶ Γαίῃ (150)
 ἀλλὰ με καὶ ροβότους Τάτρης⁹⁶⁷ ἔθελον ἀνααίρειν...

.....
 Οἶδας πάντα τὰ λοιπὰ τὰ τοῦ ἔπεος κτίσαν ἀρχήν –
 Ἀλλὰ ὁ ναυηγὸς Μανδὺς Γαίῃ μὲν ἔμεινεν
 τὸν χρυσὸν ὀλέσας καὶ μῆλον κοσμοθεωροῦν
 καὶ ἐπόχην ἰδίην – τότε οἱ λυγρὸν μέρος ἔσκεν. (155)
 Δημουσιγραφικὸς γέγονεν ἔνεκὲν περ ἐδωδῆς
 καὶ κριτικὸς γραφέων· χαλεπὸς ἰδὲ καὶ πολύπικρος.⁹⁶⁸
 Σὺν αὐτῷ γε μένεν μῆλον οὐ κοσμοθεωροῦν
 θυμὸν ἔου θέλγειν καὶ οἱ φιλότητι μιγῆναι.

⁹⁶⁷ The Tatra mountains on the border of Poland and Slovakia.

⁹⁶⁸ Remember, Mandys is based on the literary critic Pavel Mandys. Václav Z. J. Pinkava pointed out to me (23/7/2025) that the Czech translation is not faithful to the Greek in this section (156-7, “*Jakési místo tam přijal, jak praví v řeckém se textu, // neboť musel přec jíst. Byl zlý a zahořklý velmi.*” “*He took some sort of job there, as is stated in the Greek text, because he had to feed himself somehow. He was nasty and very embittered.*” [trans. Pinkava 2025]), leaving out the specific information that would identify this Mandys as Pavel.

But when the time-guardians arrived on it, they shot down at the asteroid with their deadly phaser-cannons, the whole thing trembled and darkness covered their eyes, since the right sheep, the one that watches the universe, had briefly passed out. Mandys had left it behind. And so they realised that all the things that I had told them in their prison and station was true. And they promptly made peace with my companions, and came to Earth in search of us in the past, namely me, the ship's captain, and my two robots. And now they called the very wise Franta on his radiophone, and told him that the sheep was not on Earth, but they also wanted to pick me and my robots up on the Tatra...

.....

You know all the rest, since it established the beginning of the epic – but the shipwrecked Mandys remained on Earth, having lost his gold and the sheep who watches the universe and his own epoch – it was a sorry turn of fate at the time. He became a journalist and literary critic because he had to eat, and he became cruel and very bitter. A sheep stayed with him, not the one that watches the universe, to charm his heart and mingle in love with him.

Ἄλλ' ἡμεῖς νῦν τοι τόδ' ἔπος μὲν ὅπασσamen αὐτοὶ (160)
 ἄνδρες ἐσσόμενοι ἥως ἡμᾶς ἐθελήσας
 Οὐδείς πλοίαρχος καταλέξας οἶα τὰ πάθεν
 ἀλλά γε τοι καὶ ἐγὼ Φράντης γλώσσω μεταφρήζων
 ὃς τόδ' ἔπος σύνταξα στίχοις καλοῖς ἐνὶ γλώσση
 Ἀργείων γεραῶν ὥς τῶνδε πέρι μὲν ἔοικεν⁹⁶⁹ (165)
 ξείνων πλανήτων κινδύνων ἢ πορείης.
 Σὺ δ' αὖ χαῖρε πάτερ ῥαψωδῆς περὶ κόσμου
 οὐδ' ἔτι τοι σαῖ-φαῖ μοῦνον· τόδ' ὕπαρ γέ τοί ἐστι.
 Ἄλλ' ἡμεῖς θέλομεν ἐπιβῆναι ἀστερόνῃα
 καὶ πτάσθαι τοι ἄνω λελιπόντες μητέρα Γαῖαν (170)
 καὶ ξείνῃν⁹⁷⁰ ἐπόχην· νοστήσαι εἰς ἰδίην δέ.

ΤΕΛΟΣ



⁹⁶⁹ Yes, the story is epic in scope, but that wouldn't necessarily mean that it had to have been composed in Ancient Greek, especially when Ancient Greek isn't so well suited to discussion of time travel.

⁹⁷⁰ Notice that the time that the *Astronautilia* was composed (the 1990's) is called a *strange* time.

But now we have furnished you ourselves with this epic, men of the future, just as you wanted us to. Oudeis, the ship's captain, has narrated the things that he endured, but I too, Franta, the translator of languages, was the one who composed this epic in beautiful verses in the language of the ancient Argives, since it's fitting when it comes to these things: aliens, planets, dangers, and journeys. And you, father, rejoice once more in an epic composition about the cosmos, and yet it's not just sci-fi: this is real life. But now we desire to board our starship and fly up, leaving Mother Earth behind us, and this strange epoch, to return to our own.

THE END



KOMENTÁŘ K DOKONČENÉMU PŘEKLADU

*Tolikrát, staré přísloví nám svědčí,
jsi člověkem, kolik ovládáš řečí.
A tato these zřejmě asi platí,
neb bylo stejně těžké překládati
z tohoto textu, jak kdyby byl cizí,
a dílo skunka, který v kosmu mizí,
či pana Divíška; jsou snad jen fikce stíny,
leč stejně – originál napsal někdo jiný
a rozlišený od překladatele,
byť s ním i možná sídlil v jednom těle,
však proto úkol o nic lehčí není,
což potvrzuje uvedené rčení.
Leč, ač jsem senilitou poněkud už zhloup,
jsem přec snad lepší nežli Alexander Pope
a jeho rýmovaná Iliada,
do níž se mnohá vymyšlenost ukrádá,
neb změna smyslu, jak u J. H. Voße,
to, doufám, tady nikde nestalo se,
leč já se snažil překládati věrně,
ačkoliv to šlo někde dosti perně.
K tomu se znám, s ruměncem skromným v tváři,
což, doufám, potvrdí i čeští řečtináři.*

COMMENTARY ON THE FINISHED TRANSLATION

*As goes the proverb well known, (Czechs-among),
Man has more lives, with one for every tongue.*

This seems quite true judging by my own fate:

*For it was just as tricky to translate
this text as if a stranger had first place
maybe a skunk that disappeared in space,
or Mr Divíšek, though fictional
but still – whoever wrote th'original,
is distinct from the translator in guise
even if the same shell he occupies,
which makes said task no easier to do
as per the saying, this I thus construe.*

Though I may have senilified, I hope,

*I can outdo one Alexander Pope
whose Iliad in rhyme brings in much fiction,⁹⁷¹
as does that classic master of traduction
with spin on meaning, one Herr J.H.Voss
I hope that has not happened here, of course,
for I have tried to render in translation
true to the text, which took some application.*

*Such is my claim, a blush upon my cheek,
and my case rests with Czechs who know Old Greek.*

Trans. Václav Z. J. Pinkava (2015)

⁹⁷¹ This is referring to the fact that Alexander Pope didn't translate his *Iliad* from the Greek but from Latin and French translations; Richard Bentley, a contemporary of Pope, wrote of it saying, "*it is a very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer*" (Johnson 1791:193).

Glossary

mg – metri gratia

NG – New Greek

pe – “pseudoepic” – a form created, it is hoped, in the spirit of the epic dialect but not occurring in the model poems, usually concerning “modern” words and concepts.

A

Ǻ

“HÁ” (Czech spelling
pronunciation for H), Chemical
sign of Hydrogen, “Aitch”

αἰσθητήρ -ος, ὁ sensor

αἰχμηλωτοεώμενοι = αἰχμηλωτευόμεν **pe, mg**

ἀνελκεστήρ –ήρος, ὁ lift **NG**

ἄνηρες = ἄνερες = ἄνδρες **pe, mg**

ἀντιδρασεῖα -ης, ἡ reaction in the sense of physics
NG

ἀντίτυπος -ου, ὁ copy **NG**

αὐτοκίνητον -ου, τό automobile, motor car **NG**

Γ

γόμωσις -εως, ή ammunition NG

γόμφος, -ου, ό button NG

Δ

Δοϋλαξ -κος, ό fuzzy dog advertising “DULUX”
paints on TV

E

έλκήθρος -ου, ό sledge NG

/ έλκήθρον -ου, τό

έξείτηλος = εξίτηλος pe, mg

έξίσωσις -εως, ή equation NG

έξισώσεις preceding: pe, mg

Z

ζα abbrev. δια as in ζακενόν =διακενόν space,
etc.

H

ήλεκτρονικά, ων τά electronics NG

ήλεκτρονικός, ή, όν electronic, adj.

I

ἵπιρος -ου, ὁ hippie (a formation via the Czech form of “hippíř”)

K

κάλτσα -ης, ἡ stocking **NG**

κβαντιακός, ἡ, ὄν quantum, in adj. sense as in “quantum physics”

κλουβί, τό cage **NG**

κλουβίφιν “out of a cage”: from **NG** κλουβί – cage and Homeric -φιν

κύωνες = **κύνες** **pe** formed in analogy with: ἄνηρες

Λ

λέμουρ -ος, ὁ lemur in the sense of zoology

λύμφα -ης, ἡ water – back formation from Latin

λύμφη -ης, ἡ

M

μάσκα -ης, ἡ mask **NG**

μεθήτωρ -ορος, ὁ translator, sycop. μεταθήτωρ

μεταφρῆζων -οντος, ὁ translator **NG**

μεχανίστης -ου, ό engineer **NG**

μωτοσυκλήτη -ης, ή motorcycle **NG**

N

νέκταρ -ος, τό here in the modern sense of sugary liquid produced by flowers

O

οιοπόλος, η, ον neologism: “as lonely as a pole” (Czech saying)

όθώνη -ης, ή screen as on TV **NG**

Π

παραγωγή -ής, ή perversion **NG**

πλάνης -ου, ό planet, **pe** in analogy with parallel to μύκης -ου and μύκης -ητος

προπαγάνδα -ης, ή propaganda **NG**

πυρηνιακός, ή, όν nuclear **NG**, πυρηνιακός **pe, mg**

P

ράδιόφωνος -ου, ό radiophone **NG**

ράδιενεργείος, η, ον radioactive **NG**

ράδι = **ράδι pe, mg**

ρόβοτος -ου, ό robots (**pe** alternative forms cf. *πολύς et sim.*)

ρόβότης -ου, ό preceding

ρόβως -ωτος, ό

ρούβώτης -ου, ό

ρόβότη -ης, ή a she-robot

Σ

σαϊ-φαϊ sci-fi

σαχώφων -ονος, ό saxophone

σέμτεξ, τό indecl. – semtex

σκαφοάνδηρ -ός, ό = **σκάφανδηρ -ός, ό** scaphander (space suit)

σκφάνδηρ preceding **pe, mg**

T

τηλεαφωνέω sequent **pe, mg**

τηλεφωνέω to telephone **NG**

τηλεόραμα ᾱτος, τό television **NG**

τηλεόρωσις -εως, ή preceding

τζέτ, τό	jet NG
τμήμα -τος, τό	stations as of Police NG
τουφέκιον -ου, τό	rifle, from NG – τουφέκι
τσί, τό	indecl. – “C” (Czech pronunciation) here symbol of Carbon

Υ

υπολογιστής -οῦ, ό	computer
---------------------------	----------

Φ

φείσρος -ου, ό	phaser – an established sci-fi weapon shooting pernicious rays
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Χ

χαπίον -ου, τό	pill, from NG
χροῦνος -ου, ό	= χρόνος pe, mg (cf. μοῦνος – μόνος)
χλωροφυλλή, -ῆς, ή	chlorophyll NG
χλωροοφυλλή	preceding, pe, mg



Poslední pěvec

Εἶμι δ' ἐγὼ πύματος μὲν ἀοιδῶν ἡμεροφωνῶν

οἳ γ' ἄσον ἐπὶ γῇ, φῦλον ἀπολύμενον.

Τέθνηκαν Μοῦσαι, τέθνηκε δὲ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων

Σταυρωθέντι δαμείς· μουῖνος ἐγὼ λιπόμην.

Σκιαὶ γὰρ ἐγένοντο· ἐμοὶ γλαφυρὴ φόρμιγξ

σκιά· φορμίζω πλήκτρῳ ἀηερίῳ.

The Last Rhapsode

I am the last of the lovely voiced rhapsodes

Whose singing generation has perished on Earth.

The Muses are dead, and Phoebus Apollo is dead,

Conquered by the Crucified one: I am the only one left.

For they have become shades, my hollow lyre

Is also a shade, and I play the lyre with an airy plectrum.

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Supplement A

Hetair-A.I.: Cyborg Courtesans and the Desire for the 'Ideal'

Ace Rockman

Over the course of this essay, I shall argue that the artificially constructed bodies of literary courtesans in Imperial Greek literature serve as interfaces between readers and an idealised Classical Athens, simulated as a Virtual Reality (VR) Cyberspace through φαντασία ('imagination'), and that they ultimately reveal the fragility inherent within this illusion through their artificiality. I start by exploring these courtesans as Posthumanist cyborgs, and how Imperial Greek writers represent their artificial bodies as artworks, especially statues. I then move on from this to the ekphrastic reconstruction of their bodies as surfaces for projected male desires, making them vehicles for both nostalgia and contacting Classical Athens as a Cyberspace. I then link this to Stone's 'Cyborg Envy', and end on the foreshadowing of Cyberspace's fragility through the courtesan's artificiality.

Firstly, courtesans resemble Posthumanist cyborgs due to how both 'transgress boundaries',⁹⁷² and are 'ambiguously gendered'.⁹⁷³ These cyborgian characteristics suit courtesans well in view of their masculine *paideia*,⁹⁷⁴ and how they threaten men's positions in society by displaying economic

⁹⁷² Haraway 2000:74.

⁹⁷³ Harper 1995:400.

⁹⁷⁴ McClure 2003:81.

independence.⁹⁷⁵ Courtesans therefore transgress social boundaries by crossing into masculine domains, just like cyborgs. Furthermore, the artificial construction of courtesans' identities implies that gender is performed, which cyborgs equally demonstrate.⁹⁷⁶ In Athenaeus, for example, the 'reconstruction' (ἀναπλάττουσι, *Deipnosophistae* 13.568a) of courtesans' identities is achieved by employing corrective prostheses, such as 'white lead' (ψιμύθιον) for paler skin and padding for a more shapely buttock.⁹⁷⁷ This artificiality makes courtesans symbols of theatricality and literary artifice;⁹⁷⁸ ψιμύθιον, for instance, was also used to paint theatre masks,⁹⁷⁹ and padding in slapstick comedy. The necessity of artifice in constructing courtesans' bodies demonstrates the fundamental Posthumanist precept that "human bodies have no boundaries".⁹⁸⁰ In other words, these prostheses *constitute* the courtesan's body: makeup *makes up* the courtesan, establishing her as a cyborg figure. The cyborg concept is therefore a useful device for examining courtesans' treatment in Imperial literature.

Their cyborgian nature is further typified by the objectification of women's bodies into artworks. We see this in how the comprisal of Lycinus' ekphrastic description of Panthea in Lucian's *Imagines* out of fragmented canonical statues (4) transforms her into an amalgamated being. In

⁹⁷⁵ Stratton 2007:96.

⁹⁷⁶ Wosk 2024:164; Cox-Palmer-White 2021:60-61.

⁹⁷⁷ cf. Philostratus Letter 36.

⁹⁷⁸ McClure 2003:108; Funke 2024:76.

⁹⁷⁹ McClure 2003:114.

⁹⁸⁰ Pepperell 2005:II.7.

addition to being treated as artworks, courtesans are also treated as public works due to their ‘visibility and sexual availability’.⁹⁸¹ This similarity is important to an Imperial Greek context, in which φιλοτιμία (benefactive dedication of public works) was essential for the provincial elite in gaining political influence under Rome’s *imperium*.⁹⁸² The literary petrification of courtesans can be seen as another form of *philotimia* since writers often portray their own works as monuments which will exist into the future well after they die (cf. Horace *Odes* 3.30.1-5). Returning to Lucian’s *Imagines*, for example, the interlocutors plan to put their ekphrases of Panthea ‘in a book’ (εἰς βιβλίον, 23) as a gift for both current and future mankind to ‘wonder’ at (θαυμάζειν, 23). Likewise, in Alciphron, Menecleides says that it would be the ‘right’ thing to do (δεξιόν, 4.11.2-3) if ‘some statue’ of Bacchis (εἰκόνα τινὰ αὐτῆς) were erected within Aphrodite’s sanctuary. Monuments and statues are effectively ‘immortal’ since they can potentially exist far into the future, and so the ‘textualized monument’⁹⁸³ of the literary courtesan becomes an immortalised gift for present and future generations.

Furthermore, the statuesque-courtesan motif speaks to societal concerns around courtesans replacing ἀσταί (‘citizen women’) as wives because statues replace their subjects.⁹⁸⁴ In Aelian’s *Letters of the Farmers*, for example, when Mormias’ son has fallen in love with ‘a courtesan *instead of* a bride’

⁹⁸¹ McClure 2003:118.

⁹⁸² Strazdins 2023:13-14.

⁹⁸³ Strazdins 2023:18.

⁹⁸⁴ Strazdins 2023:55; for modern parallels see Wosk 2024:45 & Parry 2024.

(ἐταίραν ἀντὶ νόμφης, 19), the preposition ἀντί emphasises the *replacement* of an ἀσπὴ by a courtesan as an ersatz-bride.⁹⁸⁵ Moreover, courtesans in Imperial literature replace their original courtesan-models as literary artifacts; immortalising them by replacing living flesh with synthetic literary material, just as the Imperial writers attempt to replace their literary predecessors via mimesis. In Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, for instance, Melitta plans to *replace* her love-rival's footprints and say, 'I have trod on you and am on top of you' (ἐπιβέβηκά σοι καὶ ὑπεράνω εἰμί, 4.5), symbolically displacing her antecedent. This is also evident in Alciphron when Glycera asks Menander to bring her to Alexandria in 'another' form (δι' ἄλλου πλεύσω πρὸς Πτολεμαῖον, 4.19.20) by transforming her into a fictional character – disembodied from her ephemeral flesh into immortal words. On a wider scale, this replacement motif typifies the desperate attempt to resurrect and fix in place the lost world of Classical Athens. Just as courtesans replace an antecedent reality, so does the artificially reproduced Classical past in Imperial fiction replace the historical one, which I will return to nearer my conclusion.

Having demonstrated courtesans' artificial construction, I now explore how ekphrasis disassembles and reassembles her body. Ekphrasis – bringing an absent object before the eyes via description⁹⁸⁶ – works by accessing the listener's "internal repository of imagination".⁹⁸⁷ If we synthesise this with Lucretius' theory of imagination, then this 'internal repository' is composed of internally stockpiled

⁹⁸⁵ See also Alciphron, 1.6; Pythagorean Women, *Letters of Advice* 4.

⁹⁸⁶ Elsner 2002:1.

⁹⁸⁷ Strazdins 2023:115.

material effulgences (*simulacra*) which form an imagined image when combined (*De Rerum Natura* 4.722-822). In other words, φαντασία, according to Lucretius, is inherently a process of recombining bodily fragments. Ekphrasis assists in forming the imagined image by conjuring the correct sequence of *simulacra* individually from the internal stockpile by fragmenting the female body into its constituent parts such as the lips, eyes, skin, etc. Through the ‘vividness’ (ἐνέργεια) of ekphrastic description, these bodily fragments are reconfigured in the mind to build a simulacral image of the woman. Langlands’ comparison of this to a painting formed through individual brush-strokes captures the process of ekphrasis well.⁹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, we cannot see the whole ‘painting’, but only “corporeal vignettes, almost disassociated from each other”, presenting a “series of dismembered bodily parts” instead.⁹⁸⁹ Forming the ‘ideal’ woman by refitting these body-parts transforms the reader into the artist’s role, like Dr. Frankenstein or Pygmalion, adding the final touches to the artwork themselves. This cyborgian reformation of the body is epitomised by the ekphrasis I mentioned earlier in Lucian’s *Imagines* (6). Similarly, in Alciphron, another ekphrasis delivered by Megara about a beauty contest between courtesans fragments each contestant’s buttock into individual ‘beautiful’ sub-parts (4.14.4-7). Beauty’s fragmentary representation in both these examples “impedes the visualisation of the statue in its totality”,⁹⁹⁰ producing a patchwork effect.

⁹⁸⁸ Langlands 2002:93.

⁹⁸⁹ Michalopoulos 2022:267.

⁹⁹⁰ Bottenberg 2020:129 on Lucian’s *Imagines* and *Amores*.

The dismemberment of the female body into idealised fragments via ekphrasis turns it into a blank canvas for male desires. The transformation which ekphrasis exerts on female bodies occurs because gender dissipates once the body is “fractured into organs, fluids, and genetic codes”.⁹⁹¹ No woman naturally has the ‘ideal’ body, since the ideal body is the elite male’s to a Greek’s mind,⁹⁹² which explains the necessity for the violent construction of feminine beauty through her body’s fragmentation, because, as previously mentioned, ekphrasis obfuscates the entire picture, which therefore obscures gender, and further demonstrates the ambiguous gendering of courtesans I mentioned at the start of this essay. To illustrate this, in Pseudo-Lucian’s *Amores*, Callicratidas, a gay man (9), becomes enamoured with the Cnidia after seeing her buttocks rather than her female secondary sex characteristics (14, 17). These degendered fragments, reconstructed through ekphrasis, invite the viewer to project their own subjective ideals onto her wireframe body. This is further typified by the incomplete ekphrases of courtesans’ bodies in Imperial literature, such as how many of the descriptions of the Cnidia ‘stop short’ of full ekphrasis.⁹⁹³ Keeping the female body *tabula rasa*, therefore, allows their bodies to satisfy multiple tastes by making a viewer’s desire be for an object of their own imagination,⁹⁹⁴ just as we have seen in the *Amores*. Idealised beauty is thus unnaturally attained, necessitating the violent reconstitution of the female form. Like cosmetic surgery, the artificially

⁹⁹¹ Balsamo 1996:6.

⁹⁹² Lee 2015:33, 37, 182; cf. Salzman-Mitchell 2008:307.

⁹⁹³ Funke 2024:76.

⁹⁹⁴ Elsner 1991:157; see also Funke 2024:52, 55.

constructed courtesan becomes the site at which the body is “surgically dissected, stretched, carved, and reconstructed” according to ‘ideological standards’ of beauty,⁹⁹⁵ which is exactly what we have seen in Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 13.568a-d with the imagery of ‘stitching’ (ράπτουσι), and ‘reconstructing’ (ἀναπλάττουσι) the courtesan’s body. Therefore, while the ideal female body is unattainable by natural means, its fragmented form serves as blank slates for the projection of male desires.

Expanding on this, the cyborg courtesan’s body becomes a vehicle for the nostalgia of Classical Athens. Courtesans’ bodies are blank slates, as just established, and, in Rauch’s view of *modern* prostitution, the main masculine desires we find reflected on prostitutes’ bodies is the desire “to be whole and immortal”.⁹⁹⁶ I believe this view is also applicable to Classical courtesans since their statuesque representations figure them as ‘forever young, beautiful,’ and ‘exposed to the viewer’s eye’, i.e., immortal.⁹⁹⁷ Women, especially courtesans, were prized for their beauty in Imperial literature. But since this feminine beauty was ephemeral, as evident in the common comparison between its lifespan to a flower,⁹⁹⁸ it was therefore *preserved* by being petrified into art and literature. The statue-form’s immortality is exemplified by Philostratus when Onomarchus of Andros curses a statue to grow old (εὖχομαί σοι γηρᾶσαι, *Lives of the Sophists* 598-599), which is, obviously,

⁹⁹⁵ Balsamo 1996:13.

⁹⁹⁶ Rauch 1988:79.

⁹⁹⁷ Steiner 2001:250.

⁹⁹⁸ cf. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.57-100; Aristaenetus, *Letter* 2.1; Philostratus, *Letters* 28, 51, 55; Aelian, *Letters of Farmers* 8.

something statues cannot do. Courtesans themselves represent Classical Athens through their proximity to important figures at *symposia*. This is evident in how Phyrne's body becomes 'a focal point' for the nostalgia which is essential to literature that includes courtesans.⁹⁹⁹ So their petrification into statues "mirrors the way that a complex and ever-changing city can be made static".¹⁰⁰⁰ In other words, through metonymy courtesans become mnemonic interfaces between readers and the nostalgia for a "now lost – and, frankly, irrecoverable – past",¹⁰⁰¹ and their representations as statues attempts to freeze this Classical past in place forever, which I will return to shortly.

Before continuing, I must briefly return to my earlier discussion on how statues replace their subjects, specifically to the point that simulating Classical Athens through fiction replaces its historical reality. As with ekphrasis, Imperial writers attempt to bring the Classical past 'before the eyes'¹⁰⁰² through ἐνέργεια ('vividness') by producing 'speech-worlds' in which to transport their audiences,¹⁰⁰³ which builds the 'consensual hallucination' that Gibson ascribes to Cyberspace.¹⁰⁰⁴ Additionally, since VR's defining trait is 'immersion',¹⁰⁰⁵ the focus on ἐνέργεια transforms the simulated Classical Athens into a VR Cyberspace. This 'immersion' is produced by exploiting descriptions of Athens' geography, such

⁹⁹⁹ Funke 2024:77.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Funke 2024:77.

¹⁰⁰¹ Cioffi 2023:187.

¹⁰⁰² Elsner 2002:1.

¹⁰⁰³ Strazdins 2023:60.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Gibson 1984:6, 59.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Featherstone & Burrows 1995:2-3; see also Heim 1995:68.

as the detailed route round the Ceramicus with several spatially aligning compound verbs in Lucian's 4th *Dialogue of the Courtesans*, and by using Classical Athenian legal terms such as *κάκωσις* in Alciphron letter 1.6.4. Furthermore, Alciphron's *Letters of Courtesans* comprise a cohesive whole when viewed in conjunction with one another by considering the travel-speed of letters, such as how Megara in letter 14 writes to Bacchis to make her jealous, but, as we learnt in letter 11, Bacchis is dead. These produce letter- and dialogue-worlds which allow readers a more immersive experience into Alciphron and Lucian's VRs of Classical Athens. Kim explains that this period of literature is characterised by the desire to gain "closer and more personal access" to the Classical past,¹⁰⁰⁶ and this view supports my own that the Imperial Greek writers create VR simulations of Classical Athens to try and supplement the historical Athens by reifying it into a closer reality.

Returning now to my previous point, Classical Athens is itself a petrified moment in time, a Cyberspace which the Imperial Greek writers wish to enter and fuse with, as demonstrated by the failure of agalmatophiliacs to fulfil their desires.¹⁰⁰⁷ Imperial writers often typify this desire to enter Cyberspace by portraying the relationship between readers and fiction, such as when Lucian depicts "individuals trapped by their own stories" on the Isle of the Blest (*True Histories* 2.6-29).¹⁰⁰⁸ Furthermore, Lucian symbolises this relationship between reader and fiction by his use of courtesans in the

¹⁰⁰⁶ Kim 2010:158.

¹⁰⁰⁷ e.g., Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 36.20-1; Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 598-99.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Strazdins 2023:65.

Dialogues of the Courtesans, since Lucian often uses erotic imagery to portray this kind of relationship.¹⁰⁰⁹ The desire to have sex with courtesans therefore symbolises the reader’s own desire to enter the Classical world she evokes. This desire to fuse with Classical Athens is analogous to what Stone terms ‘cyborg envy’, which is the desire to merge with Cyberspace by crossing the ‘human/machine boundary’, and she compares this desire to the “inarticulate longing of the male for the female”,¹⁰¹⁰ just as I have described the reader’s sexual desire for artificially constructed – in other words ‘mechanical’ – courtesans. Due to the inherency of sex to their profession, courtesans are well suited to the sexual component ascribed to Cyberspace,¹⁰¹¹ making them the perfect interfaces to mediate the reader and Cyberspace.

However, considering how courtesans’ bodies reflect male desires, as previously explored, the desire to enter Cyberspace via courtesans as an interface becomes a dangerous venture and ends with the onlooker losing himself.¹⁰¹² This is much like Narcissus’ desire for his own reflection as explored in Aristaenetus when an artist falls in love with his own painting of a girl, comparing his situation to Narcissus’, and comparing the picture to a *courtesan* (καθάπερ ἐταίρα, *Erotic Letters* 2.10). The courtesan as artwork epitomises the fact that the male reader *cannot* merge with the Classical VR, since they are an “impenetrable and impervious surface”, emanating “a

¹⁰⁰⁹ ní Mheallaigh 2014:31.

¹⁰¹⁰ Stone 1991:108.

¹⁰¹¹ Gibson 1984:38; Heim 1994:86-7.

¹⁰¹² cf. Wosk 2015:23; Plant 1995:60.

desirability to which it is singularly ill-suited to respond”.¹⁰¹³ In other words, the petrification of Classical Athens into a literary Cyberspace denies the possibility of ‘entering’ it, like with the agalmatophiliacs we saw earlier. This desire to enter Cyberspace is dangerous; the fusion of man with machine is ultimately self-destructive, as the example of Narcissus demonstrates, leading to the dissipation of male identity, which is also exemplified by the vine-women subsuming Lucian’s comrades (*True Histories* 1.8). We see warnings of this when the previously stated societal concern about courtesans replacing citizen-wives is expanded on. Young male citizens are encouraged not to waste their time on courtesans, since they ‘consume’ men’s property like destructive sea-monsters (Alciphron 1.6.2; Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 558a). Broadening this message in view of what I have discussed warns us that one shouldn’t waste their time feeling obsessive nostalgia for the Classical past, since a Cyberspace constructed through courtesans is destructive.

Courtesans’ artificiality foreshadows the fragility of the simulated past, because artifice is often shown in Imperial literature to collapse under scrutiny. The idealised body courtesans artificially produce shatters once the male viewer knows what to look for (cf. Alciphron, 4.6.4; Lucian, *Dialogues of Courtesans* 11; Galen, *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine* 10.7-8). As Funke says, failed deception ‘ceases to be artifice’ and demonstrates how the ‘illusory world’ nostalgia creates can quickly fall apart.¹⁰¹⁴ Classical Athens, when mediated through

¹⁰¹³ Steiner 2001:205.

¹⁰¹⁴ Funke 2024:77-78.

courtesans, is therefore an *illusion* of perfection, one that often fails: the makeup runs, the courtesan's body ages, and idealised beauty reveals its seams. Ultimately, the fact that the resurrection of the Classical past rests on such a fragile foundation doesn't bode well for its long-term survival.

In conclusion, literary courtesans are artificially constructed cyborgs whose bodies mediate contact between readers and the VR Cyberspace of Classical Athens which has been simulated by reading fictional stories about courtesans' demimondes. This contact is proved impossible through the imagery of statues, and their reflectivity demonstrates the inherent dangers within obsessive nostalgia. The idealised perfection projected onto the Classical past also eventually falls apart when viewed in conjunction with courtesans' fragile artificiality.

Ace Rockman, University of St Andrews,

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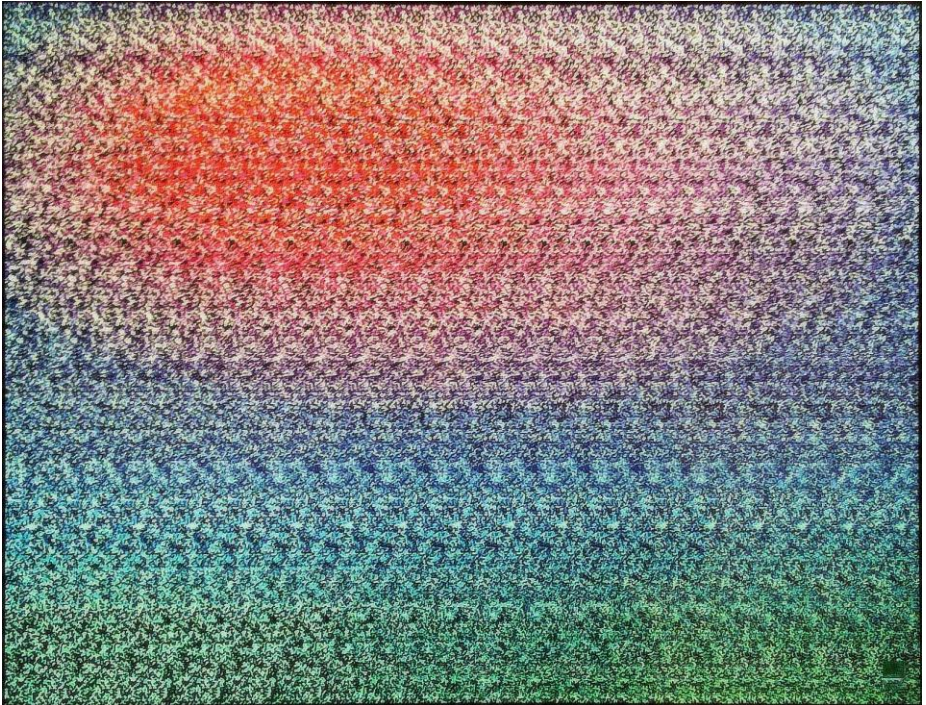
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Supplement B

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Supplement C

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